FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS E HUMANAS
UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA

# International News Reporting in the Multidimensional Network: The socio-demographics, professional culture and newswork of foreign correspondents working across Sub-Saharan Africa

Paulo Nuno Gouveia Vicente

Tese de Doutoramento em Media Digitais

**Junho, 2013**

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**Junho, 2013**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Digital Media, under scientific supervision of Prof. António Granado, Ph.D and Prof. Rosental Calmon Alves

Tese apresentada para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Doutor em Media Digitais, realizada sob orientação científica de Prof. Doutor António Granado e Prof. Rosental Calmon Alves

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**DECLARAÇÕES**

Declaro que esta Tese é o resultado da minha investigação pessoal e independente. O seu conteúdo é original e todas as fontes consultadas estão devidamente mencionadas no texto, nas notas e bibliografia.

O candidato,

_____

Lisboa, .... de ..... de .....

Declaro que esta Tese se encontra em condições de ser apreciada pelo júri a designar.

O orientador,

_____

Lisboa, .... de ..... de .....

*Dedicated to the indelible memory of António Gouveia,*
*who taught me in numerous ways that a boundary is created to be crossed,*
*and to Francisco, sweet extension of a vital love.*

*África tiene en la eternidad su destino, donde hay hazañas, ídolos,*
*reinos, arduos bosques y espadas.*
*Yo he logrado un atardecer y una aldea.*

Jorge Luís Borges, *Luna de Enfrente (1925)*

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Long and in-depth projects like this thesis impose obsessive creative detachment and isolation as well as frantic dialogue and coexistence. These are extremes that transcend the researcher himself and directly affect the daily life of those with whom he closely shares his life. This research project often obliged to a voluntary exile, physical as well as intellectual and emotional. It wouldn't be possible without the unsurpassed support of my family.

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## ABSTRACT

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORTING IN THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL NETWORK: THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS, PROFESSIONAL CULTURE, AND NEWSWORK OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS WORKING ACROSS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

**PAULO NUNO VICENTE**

A sizable portion of our everyday knowledge about Sub-Saharan Africa comes from the work of international news reporters stationed in the continent. Even though these news actors play a critical role in the communication of the distant *Other*, frequently criticized for its representational deficits, scholar empirical research on the work of foreign correspondents has been considerably neglected: it is now decades old, it lacks a systematic examination of the on the ground realities of journalism in Africa and of the evolving work of professionals, Pro-Ams and citizen media organizations supported by networked digital media.

This thesis is about the socio-demographics, the professional cultures and the newswork of these individuals. It inspects long-term trajectories in international journalism combined with short-term developments based on transformations on microelectronics and digitization. Three main lines of inquiry are outlined: who is actually reporting across the continent, what are the main characteristics of the occupational cultures in place and the impending constraints over newsworkers' production routines.

We assess how professional international news reporters are repositioning themselves in a transforming communicative environment, and how they interpret their own occupation and the role of rising actors in the transnational mediasphere. Also, we contribute with an exploratory investigation of citizen media organizations' activities.

To do so, we conduct the first recorded Pan-African online survey on the work of international news reporters, collecting answers from 124 participants in 41 countries. These findings are complemented by *in loco* semi-structured interviews with 43 professionals based in Nairobi, Dakar and Johannesburg.

Our findings challenge the narrative of international news reporting as a dying breed. Instead, they support a nuanced view towards *localized continuities* and *localized ruptures* in contemporary post-industrial mediascape: socio-demographics express a considerably precarious new economy of foreign correspondence – particularly, in the case of freelance workers – while the use of network-based digital media is driving the field towards the rising of a multilayered confederacy of distinct correspondences.

The field it is no longer an exclusive territory of professionals and these have now to deal with an unprecedented scale of user-generated content and direct feedback. Professionals now spend a very considerable amount of daily time using the Internet. This suggests a paradigm shift in reporters' newsgathering practices and, ultimately, their epistemological culture.



**KEYWORDS:** Citizen media; foreign correspondent; international news reporting; multidimensional network of correspondences; networked journalism; pro-am; social media.

## RESUMO

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORTING IN THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL NETWORK: THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS, PROFESSIONAL CULTURE, AND NEWSWORK OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS WORKING ACROSS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

**PAULO NUNO VICENTE**

Uma porção significativa do nosso conhecimento quotidiano sobre a África Subsaariana provém do trabalho dos repórteres internacionais. Contudo, e ainda que estes actores desempenhem um papel crítico na comunicação do *Outro* distante, frequentemente criticado pelos seus défices representacionais, a investigação académica sobre o trabalho dos correspondentes internacionais tem sido consideravelmente negligenciada: encontra-se desactualizada em décadas, carecendo de um exame sistemático das realidades efectivas do jornalismo em África e da evolução do trabalho de Pro-Ams e organizações de media dos cidadãos, suportados por meios digitais ligados em rede.

Esta tese tem como objecto a caracterização e análise sociodemográfica destes indivíduos, das suas culturas profissionais e trabalho noticioso. Inspecciona trajectórias de longo curso no jornalismo internacional, combinando-as com desenvolvimentos de curto prazo baseados nas transformações na microelectrónica e digitalização. São delineadas três linhas de inquérito: quem está realmente a reportar em todo o continente, quais são as principais características das culturas ocupacionais e os constrangimentos que impendem sobre as rotinas de produção dos trabalhadores noticiosos.

Avaliamos como estão os repórteres internacionais a reposicionar-se num ambiente comunicacional em transformação, como interpretam a sua própria ocupação e o papel dos actores emergentes na esfera mediática transnacional. Simultaneamente, contribuímos com uma investigação exploratória sobre as actividades das organizações de media dos cidadãos.

Para cumprir estes objectivos, conduzimos o primeiro questionário online Pan-Africano de que há registo sobre o trabalho dos repórteres internacionais, recolhendo respostas de 124 participantes em 41 países. Estes resultados são complementados através de entrevistas semiestruturadas com 43 jornalistas profissionais, em Nairobi, Dakar e Joanesburgo.

Os resultados obtidos desafiam a narrativa que apresenta a reportagem internacional como uma espécie em extinção. Ao invés, suportam uma visão diferenciada entre *continuidades localizadas* e *rupturas localizadas* na contemporânea e pós-industrial esfera mediática: a sua sociodemografia expressa uma nova economia da correspondência internacional caracterizada por uma considerável precariedade, particularmente no caso dos trabalhadores independentes (freelance), enquanto a utilização de media digitais ligados em rede conduz o campo a uma confederação de correspondências com múltiplas camadas.

O campo não é já um território exclusivo de profissionais e estes têm agora de lidar com a escala sem precedentes de conteúdos gerados pelos utilizadores e reacções directas. Os profissionais despendem uma muito considerável porção de tempo diário na Internet, o que sugere uma mudança de paradigma nas práticas de recolha informativa e, em última análise, na sua cultura epistemológica.



**PALAVRAS-CHAVE**: correspondentes internacionais; jornalismo em rede; media dos cidadãos; media sociais; pro-am; rede multidimensional de correspondências; reportagem internacional.

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# INTRODUCTION

This is a thesis about the socio-demographics, the professional culture and the newswork of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa. It inspects long-term trajectories in international journalism combined with short-term developments based on transformations on microelectronics and digitization.

This study addresses three general framing questions: *who is reporting* (demographic and occupational characterization), *how is international news reporters' culture defined* (values, attitudes and beliefs), and, finally, *what constraints impend over their daily work* (e.g. access to technology, audiences, competition, cross-cultural communication, deadlines, ethics, sources).

International news "is a major source of our knowledge about foreign Others" that can be conceptualized as being "part of continuing out-of-school lifelong education" (Mody, 2010, p. 3). The press is therefore an important knowledge source of international events for opinion leaders, decision makers, and public at large: most never contact directly with overseas events, relying "upon communications media for information about the particular issue and even the more generalized frame of reference within which it is being discussed" (Welch, 1972, p. 207).

Therefore, "problems with foreign news coverage have special importance because of the impact news has on foreign affairs" (Cordova, 1989, p. 5). If international journalism knowledge contribution is to be properly recognized, one should also do it by acknowledge and address its limitations and constraints.

Previous research has documented its *representational* deficits (agenda-setting, framing, priming), the lack of historical and/or contextual depth and the reporters' frequent ethnocentric standpoint. Since September 11, 2001 international news – its channels and professionals – gained renewed attention, frequently through new controversies and criticism, becoming even clearer that "everybody has an opinion on global journalism; and after 2001, no one doubts its importance and influence" (Sreberny & Paterson, 2004, p. 4).

In his seminal social and functional analysis of foreign correspondence, when trying to look for sources of persistent patterns and situate the position of the north-American reporter in the international communication landscape, Maxwell (1956) already states "the

tremendous importance of those who gather the news and feed it into the international communication system. And the correspondent has not gone wholly unnoticed" (p. 6).

The contemporary field of journalism is undergoing destructuration-restructuration, with new technologies helping to dissolve previous winning formulas (Demers, 2007). This tension is operating transformations in the very heart of journalistic information: "News production (newsmaking) remains in the hands of professional journalists while the editorial function (op-ed) is dispersed through so-called 'citizen journalism' on the Internet" (p. 29).

Journalistic authoritative point of view – explanation, verification and truth – is being questioned. It is now commonly argued that "camcorders, cellphones, satellite phones, bloggers and the Internet – have been transforming the traditional ways that news has been gathered and reported" (Hachten & Scotton, 2007, p. 47): normatively and empirically defining *who is a journalist* and *what is journalism* has become a urgent enterprise for journalism studies (Ugland & Henderson, 2007).

Assuming that "new digital media connect the world and lower the distinctions between professional and citizen" and that both "can express themselves and be potentially received most anywhere in the world" (Reese, 2010, p. 350), what transformations can we identify in international news reporting culture if considering as has been previously proposed that "anyone sending information from one country to another is a de facto foreign correspondent" (Utley, 1997, p. 9)?

What implications for journalism societal role are posed by the consideration of a foreign correspondence *de jure* and a foreign correspondence *de facto*? Are we facing the arising of a new type of foreign correspondent or a *remediation* of the old type supported by different means of communication? And how are *new media* adopted by professionals and by organized *Pro-Ams,* "innovative, committed and networked amateurs working to professional standards" (Leadbeater & Miller, 2004, p. 9)?

By addressing the complexities of concurrent disruptive developments affecting the newswork (Deuze, 2008d; Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009) of international reporters based in 41 Sub-Saharan countries[1] this study proposes to add to the existing literature an updated

[1] This study covers international news reporters based in 41 Sub-Saharan Africa countries: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe.

systematic and stringent focus on the on the ground realities of contemporary journalism in a world region considerably absent of international scholarship, through the eyes of its practitioners: professional journalists and professional-amateurs (Pro-Ams).

## A global networks perspective

Even if foreign press corps can be regarded as an indicator of international news interest, reflecting elitism as a major determinant of foreign news reporting (Y. Cohen, 1995), international journalism after September 11, 2001 has been between an apparent growth of significance and a considerable maintenance of low public interest (Mitchell, 2010; Sreberny & Paterson, 2004; Sutcliffe, Soderlund, Hidelbrandt, & Lee, 2009).

Although it is assumed that we live now in a more interdependent global environment – studies even suggest that place-based localism is declining and, for that matter, globalization is decreasing people's attachments to their traditional locales (H. S. Kim, 2002) – "news travels unevenly across borders" (Chakars, 2009, p. 764). For this reason, "an inquiry into their [foreign correspondents] work is also an attempt to cast some light on contemporary global interconnectedness and the possibility of well-informed cosmopolitan citizenship" (Hannerz, 1998, p. 548).

In an uneven but interdependent world, the use of "foreign" as an adjective to describe the specific nature of international, cross-national news is considered problematic. Classic spatial distinctions "between *foreign news abroad* (events in foreign countries), *foreign news at home* (for example, domestic events linked with foreign countries, such as demonstrations by immigrants related to their country of origin) and *home news abroad* (events in foreign countries connected with the domestic sphere)" (Hafez, 2007, p. 38) are being challenged. Thus, "the simplest reading of 'foreign' in 'foreign news' is certainly that it refers to news from abroad, reported across national boundaries. In that sense, one may view it as a spatial notion; but it is a matter of space already socially constructed and regulated" (Hannerz, 2004, p. 32).

Since even "small events in familiar places do not happen in a void, they are taking place simultaneously as things happen elsewhere" (Stahlberg, 2006, p. 63), the formal distinction in news presentation vocabulary between "local" and "foreign" news has been a standardized division.

This thesis on international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa is grounded in a global networks perspective, since it has been argued that in order

> to understand the emergence of new spaces more generally, it will be helpful to examine how actors in specific local settings engage with these broader networks. Transnational elites, globally connected and oriented, interact with others in specific local cultural and political contexts. Here, the global is seen in the convergent changes in norms at the level of these elites and professionals, embedded in their own networks and geographical places. The question then becomes: How do they communicate global issues in local settings? How do they interact with other professionals, through what coordinating global and local associations? What are the routinized structures for their interaction within and across specific locations, and how do they adapt to local circumstances? (Reese, 2010, pp. 348-349)

We depart from the recognition that "while political economic analyses of the changing global news landscape remains vital, we also suggest that we need better studies of how international news is made" (Sreberny & Paterson, 2004, p. 17). For this reason, we will adopt the already stated "more nuanced view of media within a broader network of actors" proposed by Reese (2010, p. 345), recognizing that a global perspective on journalism "is something different from incorporating diverse perspectives from around the world" (Wasserman & S. de Beer, 2009, p. 428).

It must be assumed that "international news selection process is complex and multidimensional one" (Golan, 2010, p. 141). By focusing on international news reporting through the lenses of practitioners' socio-demographics, culture and newswork we are considering very specific elements and factors in international communication – and we will be arguing, crucially relevant ones – building further understanding on this field of studies by reevaluating how, within the ongoing processes of media convergence, "much occupational behavior can be seen in terms of responding to *uncertainty*" (Tunstall, 1971, p. 6).

We are firmly aware that journalists' work – and of media workers in general – is constructed not only in relation to intra-media, but also extra-media influences (Reese, 2001). Although considering the hierarchy or clusters of influences[2], due to the limited resources available to the empirical component of this study we reasonably decided to exclude considerations on government, advertisers and funding, public relations, legal

[2] Preston (2009, pp. 6-14) proposes a five-fold explanatory frame comprising: 1) Individual level influences and professional values; 2) Media industry routines: institutional practices and norms; 3) Organizational influences on news; 4) Political economy factors and influences on newsmaking and 5) Cultural, ideological or symbolic power.

frameworks, and observe only at that level the more influential information sources. For this reason, a substantial part of this study can be generically regarded as a socio-professional portrait of international news reporters, replicating previous questions to which answers are now outdated and simultaneously extending those interrogations by entering new research areas (Chen, 1995).

We will be addressing the concept of the "global journalist" regarding globalization as a system of production not separated from the idea of a "global culture" (Sklair, 1999), characterized by specific technological time-space compressions: Discontinuity and decontextualization of experience (Gitlin, 1980, p. 233) are now trademarks in what has been called the condition of postmodernity (Harvey, 1989).

To implement our study through a large number of countries, deploying much attention to the "*actually existing* journalists*"* and their news production work, we are aware of that "contextual forces interact with each other distinctly over time and place, leading to differences in media focus, power, and influence" (Mody, 2010, p. 4). In this sense, our work addresses the notion of culture as a set of *ideas* (values, attitudes, and beliefs), *practices* (of cultural production), and *artifacts* (cultural products, texts): "Journalism culture becomes manifest in the way journalists think and act; it can be defined as a particular set of ideas and practices by which journalists, consciously and unconsciously, legitimate their role in society and render their work meaningful for themselves and others" (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 369).

Following Hanitzsch (2007) theoretical work, we will articulate the remarks from this study across the cognitive, evaluative and performative levels of foreign correspondents' journalistic culture, i.e. their interpretation of news work, their evaluation of professional worldviews and occupational norms, and their practices as they perceive them.

Our effort addresses journalism role as one that has been interpreted as seeming "to be globally together with the keywords of 'enlightened' world-view, such as 'democracy', 'equality' and 'human rights'" (Stahlberg, 2006, p. 65). For this reason, a careful consideration of normative assumptions must be inferred as an epistemological starting point in the study of journalism in the Global South: "Attempting to contribute more non-Western perspectives in 'The West' to the field of journalism studies should therefore not rest on the assumption that journalism in "The West" can be homogenized,

or that a binary opposition between "West" and "non-West" can (or should) be drawn in any uncomplicated fashion" (Wasserman & S. de Beer, 2009, p. 429).

**Why study news workers' perceptions and shared narratives**

Previous research about international journalism, expressively since the 1970s and until the end of the 1990s, has been mainly focusing macro (systemic determinants) and meso (organizational) levels of analysis and how do these influence the final news content. Otherwise, from a reception studies perspective, i.e. cognitive effects, journalism researchers have also been demonstrating how news media determine the events to which we must pay attention, i.e. agenda setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), how much time should be given to those, i.e. priming theory (D. Weaver, McCombs, & Spellman, 1975) and what angles do news media suggest for specific events – framing theory (Goffman, 1986; D. H. Weaver, 2007).

We share Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (1998) concern to foreground the significance of agency "in the theorization of processes of globalization because we believe that without a grounded understanding of agency, such theorizing tends to grow nebulous" (p. 3). This study is mainly focused on the most basic level of analysis, since "the production of mass-mediated symbol systems is the work of individuals or small groups" (Whitney, Sumpter, & McQuail, 2004, p. 399).

This thesis addresses the limitations of former macro theoretical approaches that almost completely subsumed news organizations (meso level), the individual reporters and their agency (micro level) in what were then called the systemic determinants of international news flow, conceptually making them hostages of a homogenization theory.

We will be systematically considering the implied macro and meso levels but our alpha and omega is to know the active international news reporters working in theoretically different organizational settings across multiple locations in Sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, we want to understand international journalists' news production through their own interpretations of what their profession is, looking at their definitions of their own agency and at how do they cope with the underlying constraints to their work.

We take in account how people directly involved in transformative processes taking place within international journalism are consciously identifying or not with it. This is an essential step towards understand globalization as the making of a global imaginary,

specifically regarding international news reporters as members of a globalizing hybridizing elite (J. Friedman, 2002).

A central aim of this research is then to observe "how members of a specific culture attempt to make themselves a(t) home in a transforming communicative environment, how they can find themselves in this environment and at the same time try to mould it in their own image" (Miller & Slater, 2000, p. 1). For this reason, an important component of this study consider the dynamics of (re)positioning: How do international news reporters engage with how Internet media position them within networks that transcend their immediate location, and what is their epistemological stance toward the work of Pro-Ams?

By focusing on an individual level we are considering the attitudes, training and background of the reporter as influential. At the same time, supported by seminal and more recent research, we admit that their work routines are a meso level answer (rules and norms) to the constraining influences on their practice, simultaneously being affected by and transforming those constraints.

While original studies concerning the professional rules journalists follow in news production, particularly the ones based on participant-observation, have been a common during the 1970s and the early 1980s, since then the topic has been neglected under a "virtual moratorium" (Cook, 1998, p. 220) resulting in a "conceptual ossification" (Ryfe, 2006). This observation is particularly relevant in the field of international news reporting at a time when findings from research and news from the media industries suggest journalism, its rules and professional identities are in a state of transition (Wiik, 2010) towards the consolidation of convergence journalism as a theoretical and analytical concept in newswork (Erdal, 2011).

This empirical urgency is even more manifest when regarding the peer-reviewed literature on the specificities of international news reporters' work and supported by the evident absence of a consolidated and updated body of studies relating international news reporting practices with the more recent developments concerning digital media and online journalism. The more systematic studies characterizing foreign correspondents have been produced many years ago (Chen, 1995; Ghorpade, 1984; Hess, 1996, 2005; Maxwell, 1956; Rosten, 1937), mainly depicting U.S. and Western European journalists or, alternatively, international reporters working in the U.S. On the other hand, research on foreign

correspondents' work in Sub-Saharan Africa have been mainly observing the South African context (Hannerz, 2004).

The existing studies demand to be complemented and updated by an in-depth examination of international news correspondents professional values, beliefs, attitudes, newsgathering routines, norms, beats and constraints – in one shortcut, their culture – and of how do these individual socio-professional profiles, through their self-narratives, relate with their media organization policies in context. Our research is a partial contribution addressing this knowledge gap.

**Why study contemporary international new reporting in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Within this study our ultimate goal is to contribute to a more accurate knowledge about the processes of systematic change of international news reporters roles and functions, particularly through the evolving approaches to newsgathering as part of a "dynamic process [that] shapes and reshapes the news" (Cole & Hamilton, 2008, p. 799).

In that sense, this study addresses a specific lacuna in global communication studies, by also producing knowledge also "in a South-to-South context, [which means for instance] exploring (…) the lives and work of foreign correspondents between China and Latin America or South Asia and the Middle East" (Kraidy & Murphy, 2008, p. 350), since "scholarly literature on the press of Asia and Africa is limited" (Mody, 2010, p. 4).

This study is aimed at international news reporters based in Africa as an effort towards de-Westernizing journalism studies (Wasserman & S. de Beer, 2009). Alternatively, expanding international media studies to non-"hot spots" (Mcmillin, 2006). We take in consideration that in news media "Africa continues to be covered least, typically through perhaps well-intentioned human interest stories that attempt to establish relevance to readers of any state" (Mody, 2010, p. 14). Data collected in the early 1990's regarding U.S. newspaper and television coverage of Africa as a world region shows that the continent was clearly the more absent from news stories (Hess, 1996, pp. 120-121).

This relative deficit of coverage is also reflected in the number of international news organizations' bureaus. In his study on foreign press corps as an indicator of international news interest, Cohen (1995) found that only 363 foreign bureaus were based in Africa; as a vivid contrast, there were at the time 4573 in Western Europe.

Historically, several shortcomings have been found by research addressing

journalistic coverage of Africa. Among others: "parachute journalism", the declining of coverage, barriers to reporting – from languages to spatial distances, communications reliability, inconvenient or haphazard air travel to constraints imposed by governments and official authorities; and from the latter, also self-censorship (Hachten & Scotton, 2007).

Our research is mainly informed by theories and concepts coming from journalism studies and media sociology, cultural anthropology and globalization studies. By assuming an interdisciplinary and mixed method approach to the study of contemporary international news reporters we are attempting to answer the "significant gap in the anthropological understanding of media" (Bird, 2010, p. 2).

This research path it is also an effort to bring together the epistemological strength of two approaches to news production processes, frequently taken separately: 1) "the study of social organization and the sociology of occupations" and 2) "a 'culturological' or anthropological approach" (Schudson, 1989, p. 266).

One further reason for this study concerns the recognition that media and journalism in international contexts is still a terrain of dispute and contestation, characterized by the frequent display of ideological smokescreens (Cottle, 2009b). Since the decade of 1960, specifically within the debates on a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in the 1970s and 1980s (MacBride, et al., 1980), two major paradigms are central, and still evolve, in this research area.

The first, cultural imperialism is particularly interested in the geo-political structures of dominance/power and in the market/capitalism influence on culture; the second, cultural globalization – otherwise called cosmopolitanism – is closely linked to the ideas of a "network society", a cosmopolite "global public sphere" or the McLuhanian idea of a "global village". A third "mixed group" of peripheral visions is consolidating, underlining "the constitutive role of culture in processes of news mediation and manufacture" (Cottle, 2009b, p. 345). The debates on international news reporting have been clearly intermediated by those two paradigmatic stances.

It has been recognized that

> the changing sphere of international journalism not only influences the news selection process but also the very nature of global journalism. Globalization has now expanded readership and media viewing into vast international markets, where once journalists were localized into their own geographic area. (…) The expansion of the viewing and reader markets require journalists and mass communication practitioners to adhere to a more globalized perspective on reporting that may adhere to internationalism and cultural

differences (Golan, Johnson, & Wanta, 2010, p. 4)

Although, this more globalized perspective on reporting cannot be separated from globalization as localization: "Globalization as human experience is always a question of localization, the reduction of the world to the experience space of the subject. Globalization can only be conceived by such reduction. It is in this sense the real compression of time-space, the contraction of the world. But it is represented as the extension of the subject rather than the reduction of the world" (J. Friedman, 2002, p. 21).

Accordingly, considering the overall research field of global communication, "an important task will be to analyze how globalization both changes the content and structure of international news, and influences the political and other social processes that depend on this public communication" (Hjarvard, 2002, p. 97), specially because "the role of journalism within these processes is often under-theorised by contemporary social theorists" (Cottle, 2009b, p. 354).

Our work hypothesis is based on a *theory of rupture* (Appadurai, 1996) in the precise sense that developments on microelectronics "offer new resources and new disciplines for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds" and "give a new twist to the environment within the modern and the global often appear as flip sides of the same coin" (p. 3). Supported by the operative concept of a mediamorphosis (Fidler, 1997) this study shares the consideration of not "only to delineate how news production for new media is different from that of traditional media, but also to ask if it is different" (Paterson, 2008, p. 3).

# CHAPTER 1 – ELEMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORTING IN MODERNITY

In this thesis we recognize modernity as a dominant multidimensional paradigm generally identifiable with the scientific division of labor and accumulation of capital (industrialization) the expansion of mass media and nation-states (Sparks, 2007). From a functional perspective, international journalism is commonly understood as "the production of news media around the world and reporting about foreign countries. Frequently it denotes coverage by Western correspondents of countries other than their own" (Chakars, 2009, p. 764), being generically defined as the news operations from "the reporter covering events outside the country" (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009a, p. 596).

Considering that "the media subsystem of international reporting certainly makes use of foreign countries as 'informational raw material" (Hafez, 2007, p. 38), foreign correspondents can be conceptualized as

> those individuals who are stationed in other countries that that of their origin for the purpose of reporting on events and characteristics of the area of their stationing, through news media based elsewhere (usually in their countries of origin). But though this is the score, in the real world of international news reporting, the edges of the category get a bit blurred, through variations in recruitment, geographical mobility, and audience definitions (Hannerz, 2004, p. 5)

Following a cultural perspective on their work, foreign correspondents can be adequately regarded as the "media personnel who report and interpret the actions and events of different societies for a selected audience of readers not native to the country" (Starck & Villanueva, 1992, p. 5).

We draw on a clear conceptual and occupational distinction. Taking international journalism and international news reporting as synonymous overlooks, in the least, specific newsgathering practices, routines and narrative conventions.

Our distinction lies in the conceptualization of international journalism as a main thematic frame and, as a departing definition, of international news reporting as a specific journalistic subculture and occupational category associated with particular field-work practices – pursuing what has been called *groundtruth* (Rosenblum, 2010) – frequently, but not always, translated in a specific narrative format or genre: *reportage*. In a shortcut: a distinct *profession* with a distinct *culture*.

This conceptual distinction allows us to narrow the scope of this study to the actual physical and epistemological status of *being there*, not closing our theoretical doors to hypothetical emerging mutations on the field.

We are also distinguishing *broadcasting* from *reporting*: The latter, taken as a newsgathering procedure, is obviously an important component of the first; the first is otherwise taken as news flows travelling across boundaries. While international news broadcasting is about transmitting *to* different countries, *to* different societies, *to* different cultures (P. Harding, 2002), this study mainly concerns international news reporters *in* different countries, *in* different societies, *in* different cultures. Despite the acknowledged differences, we are establishing a bridge with cultural anthropology, adapting Geertz words (1973) when stating that anthropologists don't study villages (places), they study *in* villages.

Therefore, "the work of foreign correspondents, one might argue, parallels that of anthropologists, in that both report from one place to another, often across cultural as well as spatial distances" (Hannerz, 1998, p. 548). International reporters and anthropologists may be both considered as professionals engaged in producing interpretations and representations of culture and society (Stahlberg, 2006), working as mediators and translators between cultures (Beliveau, Hahn, & Ipsen, 2011).

Some researchers even suggest the establishment of ethnojournalism as a model for creating culturally diverse news content, arguing that "while the objective model would have reporters believe they are being neutral and unbiased by virtue of using current news routines, ethnojournalism seeks to have reporters be conscious of and account for their biases" (Boudry, 2007, p. 151).

Despite the "sometimes uncomfortable parallels between ethnography and journalism as ways of describing and understanding reality" (Bird, 2010, p. 4), it has been suggested that anthropology can enrich journalistic practice by moving it away from event-oriented reporting towards cultural interpretation, even if "the two professions have different missions, and they work in different environments and under different constraints" (Bird, 2005, p. 307). In that regard, it is also important to note that

> Anthropology and journalism were constructed in radically different contexts for nearly opposite purposes, journalism as the handmaiden of economic and political modernity and anthropology as the guardian of cultural nonmodernity, often propagating a romantic antimodernity. The two professions developed distinctive practices of method, ethics, and politics, combined in discursive regimes, each situated in a particular socio-cultural niche of production, discipline and circulation (Hasty, 2010, p. 132)

The organizational field of modern international news has been characterized by the coexistence and competition between three levels of players – the wholesalers, the transnational satellite channels and the regional news exchanges (Sreberny & Paterson, 2004). The modern television foreign correspondent performed three functions: a journalist reporting an event, the reporter's producer and a familiar figure who established the news program's "presence" in the story (Utley, 1997, p. 3). More recently, as we will be seeing, there are also new actors moving in the field, reinforcing the blurring of previous distinction lines. Since "foreign correspondents are still the most prestigious positions in the profession (…) understanding who foreign correspondents are is relevant to understanding international journalism" (Chakars, 2009, p. 768).

## 1.1. Professionalization as boundary work and myth-making

Occupations claim and compete for jurisdiction over work areas:

> a profession asks society to recognize its cognitive structure through exclusive rights; jurisdiction has not only a culture, but also a social structure. These claimed rights may include absolute monopoly of practice and of public payments, rights of self-discipline and of unconstrained employment, control of professional training, of recruitment, and of licensing (Abbott, 1988, p. 59)

The concept of professionalism is sometimes problematic when concerning journalism since "it does not resemble the traditional learned professions with required credentials and licensing procedures". At the same time it also "aspires to an important social role and ascribes to ethical codes of conduct" (Reese, 2001, p. 175). As knowledge becomes more specialized and technology more complex, well-established professions and fields like journalism acquire new power (Jennings, Callahan, & Wolf, 1987).

Professionalization as an occupational struggle (Schudson & Anderson, 2009) – "the professional project" – shall be, in this context, interpreted as an "attempt to translate one order of scarce resources – special knowledge and skills – into another – social and economic rewards" (Larson, 1977, p. xvii).

Similarly to other occupations, professional journalism shall be understood as a boundary work, i.e. a demarcation process of attributing selected characteristics to specific institutions, in this context interpreted as practitioners, methods, stocks of knowledge, values and work organization, for purposes of constructing a social boundary distinguishing activities (Gieryn, 1983). In his study of French journalists, Rieffel (1984)

found that journalists build their occupational legitimation externally (public reconnaissance of their competence) and internally (reconnaissance among peers).

There are objective factors or foundations in place when defining the territorial dominion of an occupation: changes in technology, economic well-being of an industry, the structure of organizations, legal constraints and pressure from competing occupations. These are qualities that resist reconstruction from interprofessional competition, even if a profession is "vulnerable to changes in the objective character of its central tasks. Thus, [for instance] in the immediate postwar period, computer professionals were generally electrical engineers or programming specialists expert in the hardware peculiarities of particular machines" (Abbott, 1988, p. 39).

Due to these objective foundations of a profession, contemporary debates about *who is a journalist* need to take in consideration legal and ethical arguments as being interdependent. Regarding law, they "must vary depending on whether the context involves constitutional law, statutory law, or the distribution of informal privileges by government officials"; on the other hand, regarding professional ethics, "the debate should not be oriented around a single definitional threshold but should identify tiers that take account of different communicators' unique goals, tactics, and values" (Ugland & Henderson, 2007, p. 241).

As the legal debate focus is frequently on peoples' contribution for democracy through information disclosure, this tends to be a discussion framed by *Freedom of Expression* and *Freedom of the Press* and thus towards a more inclusive or expansive definition of who is doing journalism. On the other hand, the discussions exclusively focused on professional ethics evaluate the relative contribution from those disclosures; for this reason they tend to promote an exclusivist approach in the consideration of who can be considered a journalist – if the first promotes an egalitarian model, the second enhances an expert model.

Four areas were already identified and studied in order to understand how professions struggle to maintain occupational control, here defined as referring "to the collective capability of members of an occupation to preserve unique authority in the definition, conduct, and evaluation of their work and also to determine the conditions to entry to and exit from practice within occupational parameters" (Child & Fulk, 1982, p. 155): restriction of access to the occupation's knowledge base, context of professional employment, power and authority in the relationship of client and professional and

relationships between the profession and agencies of the state. The rise of modern professionalism is then linked to the French Revolution idea that professional careers were to be based upon talent and skill – a move on social mobility from birth and patronage to merit (Larson, 1977).

Those historical changing objective characteristics coexist with the flux of subjective redefinitions of what a professional occupation is: The problems it purports to solve, the elaborated processes towards solution and the professional knowledge. "The subjective qualities of a task arise in the current construction of the problem by the profession currently 'holding the jurisdiction' of that task" (Abbott, 1988, p. 40).

From a journalistic standpoint, these subjective qualities can be described as being the occupational values and rituals (Ginneken, 1998), translated also into specific newsgathering techniques (Tuchman, 1978).

Objective and subjective occupational characteristics combine to establish the jurisdictional delimitations of a profession. Research in the U.S. has found that "social and legal barriers around occupations raise the rewards of their members by restricting the labor supply, enhancing diffuse demand, channeling demand, or signaling a particular quality of service" (Weeden, 2002, p. 55). These closure practices directly shape the contemporary structure of occupational earnings, while not being closely linked to the complexity of the occupation's knowledge base; accordingly, they pave the floor for inequalities.

This occupational jurisdiction mechanism works by "convincing consumers that an occupation is filled with practitioners who, by virtue of their qualifications, deserve high compensation or provide a quality of service worthy of high compensation" (p. 92). Departing from Bourdieu's writings on "profession", recent theorizations have again stressed professionalism as a symbolic capital (Schinkel & Noordegraaf, 2011), i.e., the sphere where legitimate interpretations (norms and values) and acts of professionalism (knowledge and technical skills) are constantly negotiated and defined: Professionals control themselves and newcomers with reference to their perceived notions of what professionalism is.

The evolving consideration of professionalism, from a functional to a power-centered perspective, suggests that not only is a profession social constructed but also that "being a professional is no functional necessity. Rather, it is an outcome of a struggle over

control, linked to more encompassing and changing occupational contexts" (Schinkel & Noordegraaf, 2011, p. 70).

Professional work has been conceptualized as being composed by three not completely separated stages: diagnosis, inference and treatment (Abbott, 1988). This theoretical framework has been also applied to explain the cultural stages of journalistic work: The diagnostic involves taking information into the knowledge system (reporting), the inference stage corresponds to the evaluation of that collected information and the decisions on what the final treatment shall be applied (Dooley, 1999).

> Professionalization is the striving of an occupational group to get the societal significance of its occupation accepted in accordance with its own conception of it; in order to accomplish this one does not only attempt to extend and shape professional activities, but also to legitimate them (Schutte and Mok, quoted by Ginneken, 1998, p. 74)

Contemporary professions illustrate a distinct dual movement: "Toward the rise of marketable expertise as a more or less exclusively important status element, and toward the splintering of professions in relation to their spheres of social purpose, their market situation, and their organizational attachments" (Brint, 1994, p. 203). In other words, professional occupations are not stationary; they evolve over time and space.

As suggested by Ginneken (1998), research about professionalization can then be operationalized by observing 1) professional education, 2) a licensing or registration system (for instance, the system of press cards), 3) representative organizations, and 4) the proclamation of a code of ethics among journalists. Research has pointed to the fact professional journalists refer to their training, education and organization affiliation in order to set their level of expertise and, consequently, their legitimacy (Ugland & Henderson, 2007).

Regarding their jurisdictional boundaries, journalists claim that the public has a need that can be met only through journalistic expertise, revealing the occupation's terminology and insights, attempting to attract the public sympathy to its own definition of tasks and how they shall be fulfilled, and by providing the public with images of journalistic workers; such claims are issued in at least three places: Public media, legal sphere and workplace (Dooley, 1999, p. 347).

Trying to define the constituent domains of any occupation and, in what particularly this study is concerned, the modern and contemporary culture and occupational jurisdiction of foreign correspondents is equivalent to entering a territory of

romanticized teleologies and myth-making (Farish, 2001): "The myths of journalism, like those of any other trade, live in the historical biographies which, taken together, compose the ensemble of narratives constituting a culture (…) the fictions help constitute that structure of feeling within which news is invented, written and spoken" (Inglis, 2002, p. 149).

Part of the available literature is characterized by a profusion of biographies, personal or historical accounts (e.g. Baldwin & Stone, 1938; Hohenberg, 1965) often based on the desired self-projections of reporters and frequently concentrated on exceptional moments rather than in long-term constancy. Depictions from cinema (e.g. Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), Antonioni's *The Passenger* (1975), Chouraqui's *Harrison's Flowers* (2000), literature (e.g. Alan Furst's *The Foreign Correspondent* (2007) and comic strips (e.g. Georges Rémi's – a.k.a Hergé – *The Adventures of Tintin*) have reinforced the mythological aura around the foreign correspondents' life.

In this precise sense, international reporters' ideology works as a myth "but in a particular sense of that word. Far from being a mere lie or illusion, it is a deeply system of consciousness that profoundly affects both the structure of the news organization and the day-to-day practice of journalism" (Hallin, 1986, p. 23).

Research exploring how the figure of the American journalist abroad is utilized in contemporary international reporting films found that these portraits metonymize epistemological skepticism: "The character of the journalist as an investigator of crimes against humanity reflects 'a crisis of values and beliefs about information' that goes beyond the impact of the communications revolution on foreign correspondence to a generalized fear of where communications technology is leading us" (Moberg, 1995, p. iv).

A more recent study analyzed more than one hundred movies, mostly produced in the United States of America from the 1930s to the present, and found that the dominant representation of journalists points towards "an experimented reporter who is obsessed by his job and incapable of living in family. On the other hand, contrary to the cliché, they seem to behave quite ethically and they follow a social goal with his work" (Valencia, et al., 2010). This conclusion is even more relevant if we consider that the professional category most frequently portrayed – 44,8% in movies about print journalists' lives, 34,4% in those portraying television journalism – is composed by reporters and correspondents. For these reasons, it is accurate to conclude that international reporters are par excellence cinematographic figures.

## 1.2. An international elite of journalists: functions and demographics in foreign correspondence

With reference to media ownership, technology, America's involvement in international affairs and correspondents' roles and routines, the history of modern foreign correspondence has been conveniently divided in four periods: the popular press correspondents (1840-1900), organized foreign correspondents (1900-1920), the golden age correspondents (1920-1970), the corporate correspondents (1970-2000) (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009b).

Assuming news as a form of knowledge – transient and ephemeral, closer to "acquaintance with" than "knowledge about", concerned with the present rather than with the past or the future – and recognizing that "news is not history because, for one thing among others, it deals, on the whole, with isolated events and does not seek to relate them to one another either in the form of causal or in the form of teleological sequences" (Park, 1940, p. 675), one basic structural element on international news reporting in modernity has been what we will call the *epistemology of being there*.

This characteristic of eyewitnessing as a journalistic keyword has three dimensions – the eyewitness as report, as role, and as technology – used over time as a claim for journalistic authority of news reporting in questionable circumstances, helping building its cultural authority: "Eyewitnessing is thought to offer a kind of proof that is different from that provided by others types of reportorial chronicles. Drawing from the authority gained by being on the site of an event being reported, eyewitnessing refers to an ability to account subjectively for the events, actions, or practices seen with one's eyes" (Zelizer, 2007, p. 411).

In order to permit this personal, firsthand, eye-witness knowledge of international events, translated into original reporting, as far as modernity concerns news organizations relied greatly on overseas bureaus as "the predominant site for the production of news" (West, 2010, p. 94).

International reporters served – and still do – as modern witnesses mediating international events (Richards & Mitchell, 2011). Research about the work of Harold Whitmore Williams as a foreign correspondent during the Russian revolutions (1905 and 1917) suggest that reporters were observers and participants when assuming the responsibilities of journalists as including a moral commitment, in that specific case to the

overthrow of autocracy and the defense of democracy. This idealized function often translated in William's case on social and political commentary rather than reportage (Brady, 2003).

Other studies have acknowledged that during the First World War (1914-1918), British correspondents in the Western front "occupied a particularly unstable position between the many sites and points of view within a cubist landscape of shattered geographies and unstable boundaries" (Farish, 2001, p. 273).

This very indispensable characteristic of modern Western international news reporting – the actual physical and epistemological state of being there, occupying an uncertainty zone between adventurous explorers and scientific travelers – consolidated international news reporters as *witnesses* with the specific occupational function of documenting the lives of others, regarding their narrative stance as "the product of both embodied proximity and disembodied detachment" (pp. 273-274).

This fundamental tension has led to debates over whether journalists should or not testify in court, for instance at the International War Crimes Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia: While some journalists interpreted their work in terms of a civic duty and moral obligation, others argued that decision threatens the defense of trust regarding information sources (Beattie, 2005).

More recently it has been recognized that, due to the fragile security situation and also to the limitations concerning proficiency in Arabic language, Western news organizations covering Iraq war (2003) are highly dependent upon Iraqi journalists and fixers. This is an important recognition at this point in order to briefly demonstrate how the conceptualization of reporters as witnesses must crucially consider that they don't work alone, but rather within a hierarchy regime of production. From this one can infer a related gradation of witness.

Apart from the fact that the geographies of foreign correspondence have received little academic attention (Farish, 2001), studies on the geographic distribution of foreign press corps not only show that they are mostly concentrated in the U.S. and Western Europe, but also that elitism[3] and proximity are two major determinants on the deployment of journalists around the world. In this sense, "patterns of foreign coverage are related to

[3] In his study Cohen (1995) defined elitism as "media interest in 'important', 'powerful' and 'prominent' individuals, institutions and countries.

the places in which foreign news organizations have foreign correspondents" (Y. Cohen, 1995, p. 90).

Given "their small numbers and the importance of their jobs, correspondents began to be seen as a professional elite, who operated fairly autonomously from the home office" (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009b, p. 605). More recently has been stated that

> journalism professionals and media officials are clearly among the globalizing elites who represent an important source of influence and social change. These transnational elites participate in global networks connecting local settings, bypassing official state channels, and introducing their own logic into national spaces, including with local journalistic cultures and media systems (Reese, 2010, p. 349)

Previous studies on the demographic composition of foreign correspondents have portrayed journalists working for U.S. and Western European news organizations as well as foreign correspondents working in the United States of America or in the UK (particularly, in London). For these reasons, journalism studies have yet to test the general conclusion – and the correlative findings – that "journalists are increasingly elites, partly because the news organizations that employ foreign correspondents are most likely to employ elites" (Hess, 1996, p. 12), by analyzing other regional and organizational settings.

As part of a larger study of social and political leadership in the U.S., Lichter, Rothman and Lichter (1986) found that the demographics were clear:

> the media elite are [were] a homogeneous and cosmopolitan group, who were raised at some distance from the social and cultural traditions of small-town middle America. Drawn mainly from big cities in the northeast and north central states, their parents tended to be well of, highly educated members of the upper middle class. (…) In short, the typical leading journalist is [was] the very model of the modern eastern urbanite (p. 294)

### 1.2.1. Age, professional experience, sex, region where posted

In the 1950s, Maxwell (1956) examined U.S. foreign correspondents within the framework of "the five major institutions: familial, educational, economic, political, and religious" covering an estimated "55 to 60 per cent of all full-time correspondents of American nationality [179 in number] who are employed abroad by American agencies, newspapers, news magazines, radio networks, and combinations of these organizations" (pp. 387-388).

The author revealed that American correspondents assumed the function mostly between the ages of 25 and 30 years old. Almost forty years after, in 1992, the mean age of most U.S. reporters working as foreign correspondents was 43 years-old; the majority were 30-39 years-old (45,8%). Most of them had already spent a significant time abroad before becoming foreign correspondent (79%), mostly pursuing an university program (37%), travelling independently (26%) or with family (21%) (Hess, 1996); these data are consistent with Nosaka study (1992) on American foreign correspondents working in Japan. From the existing data, and although exceptions exist, this appears to be a valid conclusion whether concerning men or women correspondents, particularly regarding conflict reporting "because most of the correspondents were well into their journalism careers before they were assigned duties in the war zone. This is likely a reflection of the fact that many of the correspondents (…) had to prove themselves capable and worthy" of such an assignment (Fennel, 2005, p. 69). Nosaka (1992) found that the average American correspondent working in Japan had thirteen years of experience in journalism, working specifically as a correspondent for about seven and one half years.

Regarding sex, authors in the 1990s depicted the field as "a mostly male club" (Utley, 1997, p. 3). Among the 29 correspondents who responded to Nosaka study (1992, p. 18) only one was a woman. Even though it continued to be so in the end of the 1990s, the available published data already pointed to a more egalitarian occupation. In 1992, 63,5% of U.S. foreign correspondents were male and 36,5% female. Before (94% - 6%), during the 1960s (95% - 5%), the 1970's (84% - 16%) and the 1980's (67% - 33%) it was even clearly an occupation mostly executed by men (Hess, 1996, p. 132).

In their study observing the work of 404 correspondents based in London, Morrison and Tumber (1985) register that only 15 percent of the foreign media corps are women, being expressed that "the main reason for the underrepresentation of women probably rests within the occupational structure of journalism itself in that very few women are in a senior enough position even to be considered for the prestigious role of foreign correspondent" (pp. 454-455).

In modern journalism history, few women were working as foreign correspondents. They became associated with specific moments of crisis, for instance the American-Mexican war (1846-1848) (L. S. Hudson, 1999) and China's civil war (1927-1937). This trend has been historically interpreted as revealing the "difficulty in access to foreign assignments and gendered criticism of their lives and/or work they produce when they file reports from foreign posts" (Beeson, 2004, p. 17).

Early twentieth century women correspondents' lives like Marguerite Harrison are sometimes described as adventurous. They didn't exclusively work as professional journalists, but rather as reporters, foreign correspondents, intelligence agents, travel writers and filmmakers (Griggs, 1996).

Research depicts Vietnam war (1955-1975) as a transitional period for women in war correspondence, arguing that they were encouraged by the women's movement and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to pressure their news organizations and the military officials to guarantee them equal access. Despite this move, most women journalists covering Vietnam conflict were freelancers, from an universe of 267 American women accredited by the United States Department of the Army (Born, 1987).

More recent studies already contemplating the Persian Gulf war (1990) and Iraq War (2003) renew the consideration that "amongst the most difficult areas for women journalists to gain recognition for their contributions was within the traditionally masculine domain of war reporting" (Fennel, 2005, p. 138): During the Persian Gulf war approximately 10% (200 in a universe of 2000) of the journalists officially registered with the American military were women (p. 51).

Regarding region where foreign correspondents are more often deployed, considering the U.S. correspondents studied by Maxwell (1956), mostly were based at a urban European capital – particularly at London (15,79%), Tokyo (14,35%), Paris (10,05%) and Rome (7,18%). In 1992, most of them were still based in Europe (53%) and Asia (25%); Africa (5%) was the world region with the smallest presence of U.S. foreign correspondents. It has been argued that "the culture of foreign correspondence categorizes journalists about equally as specialists – Asia hands, Africanists, and so forth – and generalists. For the generalists the lure of assignments in different corners of the world is perhaps the main attraction of their work" (Hess, 1996, p. 51).

The existing studies also observe who the foreign correspondents working in the U.S. are, concluding that in 2000 they were mainly working for Western Europe (47%), Asia (27%) and Americas (12%) based news organizations. Africa was also the world region with less foreign correspondents based in the U.S. (2%) – most were 30-39 years old, men (75%), based in Washington (56%) for 2 to 5 years (Hess, 2005). Previous research contemplating exclusively Washington, D.C. foreign correspondents show that the typical international reporter in the 1990s was a male of 41,7 years old, college-educated, well-paid, with 17,5 years of professional experience (Chen, 1995).

These geographic considerations are relevant in the study of international news reporters' work in the sense that territorial conceptions of society, frequently built by dividing space into nation-states, "have the added advantage of assisting foreign correspondents to skirt complexity, thus promoting brevity and allowing them to probe problems selectively" (West, 2010, p. 107).

### 1.2.2. Education

Previous studies portrait foreign correspondents as cognitive elite. In the early 1990s, research found that 57% of [U.S.] correspondents who began their careers before 1960 had attended the most selective schools; on the other hand, 70% journalists who began their careers since 1990 had done so and 85% of those aged thirty or younger had attended very selective colleges (Hess, 1996, p. 181).

Although demographic characterizations of contemporary correspondents – expressively, women – is still a very scarce research field where so much is unknown, from the existing available literature it is possible to state that concerning U.S. foreign correspondence "in recent years higher education seems to be a necessary qualification for most female war correspondents" (Fennel, 2005, p. 69). Among these journalists, most have post-secondary educations, degrees in journalism or in the humanities and social sciences (e.g. international relations, political philosophy).

It has been admitted that despite formal education, "with notable exceptions, most foreign correspondents are not historians or regional specialists. Only a few speak a foreign language" (Mody, 2010, p. 20). Also, while "many diplomats get at least some training in intercultural communication (…) many foreign correspondents and international reporters do not. Very few journalism schools devote much attention to these problems" (Ginneken, 1998, p. 70).

Hess (1996) presents data apparently dismissing these historical claims: in 1992, U.S. foreign correspondents stated showing some proficiency in two (36%), three (23%), four (10%) and more (5%) languages. Although, in the exact extend that these numbers are based on foreign correspondents self-evaluation it is difficult to extract a more exact appreciation of their actual practical meaning. On the other hand, Nosaka (1992) found that the language barrier was still a problem for American reporters working in Japan, particularly for older correspondents.

Research has shown more recently how the scarcity of Western reporters with proficiency in Arabic language is among the factors explaining why Iraq war (2003) coverage is highly dependent of Iraqi journalists' and fixers' work. The existing literature demonstrates that "the overwhelming majority of the journalists spoke no or very little Arabic, and all asserted that few Western journalists had an adequate level of language competence for journalism" (Palmer & Fontan, 2007, p. 8); the study also illustrate that reporters are aware that language dependence upon translators/fixers have its own risks such as possible mistranslations and/or omissions, the inability to understand the local culture and the fixer directing journalists' view.

For this reason, language proficiency and more generally the discursive features of foreign correspondence are crucially important in order to understand how journalists' work construct specific conceptions of societies across time and space, since "social norms establish and maintain communicability. They are reference in foreign correspondence, because without them, journalism would be unreadable" (West, 2010, p. 93), specially having in mind that the audience have frequently no prior direct experience with the reported place.

### 1.2.3. Occupational profiles

The scarcity of social sciences' studies dedicated to the flux of occupational meanings with international news reporting it is not a new problem for researchers:

> Under the influence of the many good, albeit at times over-dramatic, books about and by foreign reporters, as well as of 'the Hollywood hacks', the American public has come to view such corresponding as 'dream work', in which daily titillation of all the practitioner's nerve endings produces a frenzied but alluring existence. And not only the general public but many of the correspondents themselves are impressed with their roles, particularly in that dangerous subdivision of foreign reporting, war correspondence (Maxwell, 1956, p. 11)

This consideration relates to what has been conceived as *sociological imagination*, a sense of knowledge and interconnectedness linking individuals to the large world in which they live: "The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals. It enables him to take into account how individuals, in the welter of their

daily experience, often become falsely conscious of their social positions" (Mills, 1959, p. 5).

By trying to define from the existing literature some basic functional terms by which we can argue we are in presence of a foreign correspondent – long-term trajectories combined with short-term developments – we are once more addressing the idea of professionalization in journalism and the one of specialist correspondent (Tunstall, 1971). Thus, we are looking for international reporters' "enduring values" (Gans, 1979, pp. 41-52), recognizing that "the objective reality of news is formed of our most fundamental and intractable subjectivities" (Pedelty, 1995, p. 8).

Analyzing previous research efforts towards a typology of modern foreign correspondence based on employment/occupational setting and the time based in the local, i.e. correspondents' mobility, research identifies a division between one A Team and one B Team (Pedelty, 1995). Usually, the first is composed by staff reporters (long-termers, special assignment reporters/parachutists or spiralists); in the second occupational category we find stringers and fixers (Hannerz, 2004). Blurring these lines, international news reporting is also practiced by a very diverse group of freelance journalists (Hess, 1994, 1996). It has been recognized that "the relative preponderance of each may depend on the centrality of particular beats in the global landscape of news, and the economics of the news business" (Hannerz, 2007, pp. 303-304).

Stringers are described as belonging to "a subcategory of freelancer who supplies content on a regular basis for a specific client", being recognized that "as major news organizations closed or consolidated foreign bureaus and cut back on permanent staffing abroad, overseas stringers became even more crucial to international coverage" (Bunce, 2011; Polumbaum, 2009, p. 644).

On the other hand, fixers' work is considered as "an additional relay in the process, intervening between the event, the source and the journalist both through the arrangements that they make and in their role as interpreter" (Palmer & Fontan, 2007, p. 6; Paterson, Andresen, & Hoxha, 2011).

Research observing Iraq war (2003) coverage shows that most fixers working for French news organizations had occupied official posts during Saddam Hussein's regime – some were highly placed ex-military, as general and colonel. It has been found that "French journalists did not regard their pasts as a problem, rather as a useful way of opening doors

in Iraqi society, while taking note of the extent to which their pasts might inflect the way in which they carried out their work" (Palmer & Fontan, 2007, p. 9).

Due to this occupational diversity in the core of international news reporting, one can hardly argue that we are necessarily in presence of a field of specialists, at least in the topical sense proposed by Tunstall (1971)[4]. Although that hypothesis shall not be also be automatically dismissed. In his study, Hess (1996) gives a demographic form to this occupational specialization concluding that

> the correspondents who are specialists have three characteristics that make them statistically different from their more nomadic peers: they are more likely to be married to a person from the region, they have greater proficiency in the language of their posting, and they are more likely to have a connection with the region in their youth (pp. 52-53)

It is the knowledge accumulated by these journalists as newsgathering specialists that underlies the argument that "there is no adequate substitute for having first-rate journalists who report from the region in which they are based, where they know the players, and where they speak the language" (E. Jordan, 1999, p. 9). More explicitly:

> (s)he [the correspondent] was traditionally a national of the country in which his/her channel was located, who spent a substantial period abroad and got to know the host nation well, which perhaps included becoming fluent in the language. Such a person was assumed to be best placed to mediate between two nations: s(he) could be assumed to understand the target nation's news needs about the host nation, and to have acquired enough knowledge of the host nation to understand what was important in that context too (Palmer & Fontan, 2007, p. 20)

We deploy in this study the concept of a *multidimensional network of correspondents*, recognizing that "from pigeons and ponies to planes, from clippings to correspondents and from a lonely war reporter to pack journalism, foreign newsgathering has grown to encompass a vast network of reporters worldwide" (Cordova, 1989, p. 2).

[4] Tunstall (1971) studied full-time journalists who worked in the selected fields of Politics (Lobby), Aviation, Education, Labour, Crime, Football, Fashion and Motoring.

## 1.3. The culture of foreign correspondents

Journalists' culture is theorized as the interaction of their *ideas* (values, attitudes and beliefs), *practices* and *artifacts*. In this sense, journalists are not detached from cultural considerations. "They belong to a specific culture and to specific professional subcultures" (Ginneken, 1998, p. 65). In this context professionalism works as a subculture of norms and values that informs journalists' socialization.

Previous studies suggest that in certain conditions (e.g. war coverage) reporters may skip the fences of their occupational jurisdiction. In those cases, "reporters are a community in and of themselves. They work together, play together, and often, live together. They share an integrated set of myths, rituals, and behavioral norms. They are, in short, a culture" (Pedelty, 1995, p. 4). In other words, "journalists, whether staff correspondents (long-termers, parachutists, or spiralists), stringers, or fixers, belong to a community of practice which is spread over the globe in an organized if notably uneven fashion" (Hannerz, 2004, p. ix).

Research depicting foreign correspondents' work during the First World War observes the emergence of the *pool system,* i.e., "the collaborative system of news compilation practiced by correspondents at the end of each day of travel was a physical performance based on covering ground" (Farish, 2001, p. 283).

Despite the cultural hybridized imaginary projected by their founding mythologies, this community of practice is often reduced to its world of appropriation. Even if "the nation state contains a jumble of transnational populations as well as the national population. (…) The container is multicultural, but the social experiences of its inhabitants may well be entirely monocultural in the sense that there are a number of separate worlds" (J. Friedman, 2002, p. 21) in the same time and space. This is why interconnectedness – interpreted as simultaneity or juxtaposition – must be conceptually differentiated from multiculturalism as a social experience of diversity.

The overall role of journalists in modern societies – particularly, how it is assumed and defined by journalists themselves – frames "the personal and professional orientations of individual journalists" (Preston & Metykova, 2009). Journalism function within society can be defined in relation to a more neutral or a more participant envisioned intervention, translated through normative theories of mass media in society (McQuail, 1983), journalists' culture (Hanitzsch, 2007) and how patterned journalists talk about journalism

and make sense of it[5] (Zelizer, 2004, pp. 29-31) – what in McQuail terms corresponds to the "working theory" of mass communication.

Objectivity as a professional value "is often seen to match up closely with the neutral model of journalism and the notion of 'balanced' or even-handed reporting" (Preston & Metykova, 2009, p. 36). Some authors have defined this interpretation of journalism as being materialistic and positivistic, since it favors observation of "facts" and physical evidence provided by human senses (Manoff, 2002).

Research has depicted how covering war impacts journalists' understanding of their mission and role, expressed as "to bear witness, to be the eyes and ears of history and, some would add, to provide enough context for the facts and events to be understood". Most participants in the study consider that their views had not significantly changed after work in Iraq (2003), although "many described new insights or beliefs that were solidified by their experience" (Thomsen, 2007, pp. 186-187).

Also, studies among Brussels press corps, specifically journalists working for Financial Times (FT), have portrayed the existence of an European elite sphere and elite-elite communication, illustrating reporters' frequent access privilege to European Commission official sources: "For most journalists, interviews with Commissioners or civil servants at the top level of the bureaucracy are difficult to obtain. The FT is the major exception" (Corcoran & Fahy, 2009, p. 106).

Professional norms and rules not only construct a specific culture but also are constructed and validated within that particular culture and particular subcultures. Journalism is "part of a culture – a given symbolic system, within which and in relation to which reporters and officials go about their duties. (…) Where the organizational view finds interactional determinants of news in the relations between people, the cultural view finds symbolic determinants of news in the relations between ideas and symbols" (Schudson, 1989, p. 275). An example:

> While the rules of objective journalism prohibit reporters from making subjective interpretations, their task demands it. A 'fact', itself a cultural construct, can only be communicated through placement in a system of meaning shared by reporter and reader. Journalists cannot resolve this contradiction between professional myth and practice, only manage it through judicious use of news frames (Pedelty, 1995, p. 7)

[5] Zelizer (2004) refers to five references: Journalism as sixth sense (news sense), as a container, as a mirror, as a child and as a service

Culture has both a form and content. Form refers to narrative, storytelling, and representation conventions: news is not a descriptive mirror of reality, it draws on narrative conventions so it "actively shapes reality into acceptable stories" (Bird, 2010, p. 8). On the other hand, content is the substance of conscious and/or unconscious values, attitudes and beliefs. Both form and content are produced through routine practices.

These considerations frame journalists as storytellers, since "the notion of different modes of narrative serves as a method of guiding reporters to locate appropriate facts. Questions to be asked are contained in the form of presentation" (Tuchman, 1978, pp. 101-102). Narrative conventions in journalism shall be regarded as professional and organizational products or artifacts of a specific culture. Admittedly, "one of the most enduring routines is the story structure. To appeal to an audience, media content often takes this form. The story must have an inherent appeal, considering the prominence in culture of myths, parables, legends, and oral histories" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 114).

Although this is not the direct subject of this study, and since news is regarded as public narratives, it is crucially important to state that "the acceptance of representational conventions as facticity makes reality vulnerable to manipulation. Indentifying those conventions as artful manipulations enables one to regard filmed events as social accomplishments – the product of newswork" (Goffman, 1986, p. 450).

> 'Once upon a time' announces that what follows is myth and pretense, a flight or cultural fancy. The news lead proclaims that what follows is factual and hard-nosed, a veridical account of events in the world. But, ultimately, both the fairy tale and the news account are stories, to be passed on, commented upon, and recalled as individually appreciated public resources. Both have a public character in that both are available to all, part and parcel of our cultural equipment (Tuchman, 1978, p. 5)

Even if for different purposes and through distinct narrative conventions, both fictional and documentary texts (artifacts) operate by trying to constantly negotiate on the suspension public's disbelief. In this strict sense, arguing that news or documentary reports are stories it's not a matter of "invention", but one of giving a cultural determinant form and content: "To say that a news report is a story, no more, but no less, is not to demean the news, not to accuse it of being fictitious. Rather, it alerts us that news, like all public documents, is a constructed reality possessing its own internal validity" (Tuchman, 1976, p. 97). It's this social construction of news that allows to understand the cultural capital of journalists in its embodied form, the "best hidden and socially most determinant

educational investment, namely, the domestic transmission of cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 244)

In the context of this study we must substitute the "domestic" insight by the transmission of reporters' habitus through socialization: How international reporters acquire their cultural capital from each other's practices, and how do their newsgathering routines reflect their values and beliefs. "Because the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, it is predisposed to function as symbolic capital, i.e., to be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence, as authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition" (p. 245).

Therefore, for instance, a *scoop* or an *exclusive* is regarded as a competence – efficacy objectified – through a symbolic logic of distinction, which derives "a scarcity value from its position in the distribution of cultural capital and yields profits of distinction for its owner" (p. 245). In other words, "striving for exclusives remains a key element to journalistic success in the marketplace, whether the context is domestic or international" (Vaughan, 1999, p. 50).

These competences are perceived by peers – local correspondents as well as editors at home – as a distinction, and even if it falls outside the scope of our current analysis, hypothetically also by the audiences/publics. In this way, at least in this precise sense, the bureaucratic structure of news reports may be also regarded as a strategic ritual towards social recognition. At the same time, this cultural capital engenders competition, since it operates in a world of scarcity, where appropriation is directed to the resources objectively available.

From a cultural perspective "an event is not just a happening in the world; it is a *relation* between a certain happening and a given symbolic system" (Sahlins, 1985, p. 153). News are frames through which we learn about ourselves and "others" (Tuchman, 1978) within a broader news culture, composed by the institutions, forms, practices and audiences of journalism, resisting to the "analytical separation of the 'cultural' from the 'economic' and the 'political' prefigured by the media-society dichotomy" (Allan, 2004b, p. 4).

Only in this sense is possible to adjustably speak in a cultural history of foreign correspondents and show, for instance in the case of U.S. war correspondents, how they emerged through "confronting U.S. state power with 'on the spot' visual and textual witness accounts of the violence entailed by that power in a period of territorial expansion

across the hemisphere, mass media development, and renewed aesthetic challenges to representing war" (Trivedi, 2009).

### 1.3.1. Travel and Cosmopolitanism

Even before the old "Boeing 707 halved the time it took journalists to get to another continent" (Utley, 1997, p. 4), travel was already a structural element of foreign correspondence. Research addressing foreign correspondents' work during the First World War already observes that "the travels of correspondents force us to engage with the geopolitical conditions that scripted their performances and impressions, as well as the negotiation, subversion, and acceptance of these conditions" (Farish, 2001, p. 274).

What do these access and mobility constraints tell us about socio-professional characterization and newsgathering practices in international news reporting? First of all, that it is not just a jurisdictional bastion of permanent and based long journalists, but often one of "parachutists". This term is frequently used as pejorative jargon describing "a cost-cutting ploy through which a major news organization reduces the size of its staff of permanent foreign correspondents and instead covers foreign news only when a big story comes along by flying ill-equipped reporters to the scene" (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009a, p. 608).

Although sometimes perceived as a contemporary trend in Western international news reporting (Palmer & Fontan, 2007), the reconnaissance of these "often 'outside', occasionally 'inside, but ultimately in-between and uncertain'" journalists is already identified in the scholar literature regarding foreign correspondents in the First World War (Farish, 2001, p. 285).

The newsgathering work of these professionals has been conceptualized in an ambivalent manner: Between their "fresh eyes" on the scene, capturing what permanently stationed reporters already take for granted, and their recurrent focus on "exotic" events, not being able to portrait the underlying processes and the follow-up context.

Studies have described the precarious background work and the consequent bias and knowledge deficits of the "parachute journalist":

> Some reporters live with their bags packed. Whenever a crisis happens in another country, they fly there and get the story. The problem arises when the press comes in only for a crisis and does not understand the country, the language or the issue. Also, the practice is

> reactive and does not warn readers ahead of time of a impending crisis. The news goes unreported and then suddenly appears as a big story. The practice also encourages journalists to stick together in a foreign place, developing a 'pack' mentality (Cordova, 1989, p. 16)

In his ethnographic study of U.S. reporters covering the war in El Salvador, Pedelty (1995) finds that "most parachuters do not have time for background research or independent investigation" and that "in fact, parachute 'research' usually consists of little more than reading news clippings, most of which are also written by parachuters" (p. 110). Also, Hess (1996) depicts this as an "economical system of news gathering and one guaranteed to make the world appear even more dangerous than it is" (p. 4).

However, there are some counter-arguments in place, stating that not only that this type of coverage allows events to be framed and documented by a more broad range of professionals, through special assignments. On the other hand, also "traditional foreign correspondents are to some degree parachutists" (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009a, p. 608), with a national, regional or continental area of coverage.

Foreign correspondents work has been described as a variance of cosmopolitanism, "amongst the most celebrated transnational migrants of our times":

> On the one hand, the correspondents themselves may be seen as cosmopolitans: world-wise travelers, familiar with many places, connoisseurs of diversity. Here the emphasis is more cultural and experiential (along the lines I sketched cosmopolitanism in the context of world culture). On the other hand, in recent years, notions of cosmopolitanism have returned on the intellectual scene with a stronger political and ideological load than they have had for some time (…) Even if it is not exactly preoccupied with the construction of cosmopolis, a world society, as some sort of politically integrated entity, the cosmopolitan impulse tends to favour more inclusive arrangements of compassion, human rights, risk management, solidarity, and peacefulness (Hannerz, 2007, p. 301)

In short, foreign correspondents shall not only be perceived as cosmopolitans, but also their work may be regarded as cultivating cosmopolitanism in their audiences.

Sometimes "cosmopolitans, like other travelers tend to stick together (…) Transnationals are only border crossers with respect to the national borders that define them, but they are most often quite fixed in their transnational worlds as well, as endosocial as any diehard local" (J. Friedman, 2002, p. 21). This consideration has a deep bond with the definition of foreign correspondents as expatriates: "People not strongly rooted in the territory where they reside for a period, often more affluent than the locals, engaging in a lifestyle and a pattern of social contacts which somehow does not quite belong there, in

large part in the company of others of more or less their own kind" (Hannerz, 2007, p. 304).

For this reason, contemporary international journalism cannot be fully understood if not in relation to globalization:

> This process refers to the intensification of social interconnections, which allows apprehending the world as a single place, creating a greater awareness of our own place and its relative location within the range of world experience. As part of a larger platform of communication media, journalism contributes to this experience and thus represents a key component in these social transformations, both as cause and outcome (Reese, 2010, p. 344)

Within this framework, journalists – expressively, foreign correspondents - "extend their occupational communities and cultures across borders". In this sense, "they are key players in today's globalization of consciousness" sharing the condition of being in a transnational contact zone "engaged there in reporting, representing, translating, interpreting – generally, managing meaning across distances" (Hannerz, 2004, pp. 2-3).

In this sense, international news reporters are key elements in the more general discussions on an "information society" (Webster, 1995). Even if the press has been reporting news from abroad for over a century, "it has been only in the past three decades that we have see how great events abroad vividly illustrate the technocentric age, the melding of technology and electronics" (Hachten & Scotton, 2007).

## 1.4. The shrinking world of modern international reporting

Foreign correspondence has always been a constantly evolving journalistic field. If "media ownership, advances in technology, America involvement in world affairs, and the evolution of correspondents' roles and routines have shaped foreign correspondence ever since it's early days in the eighteen century" (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009b, p. 603) is it still possible to define a unique or unchallenged *master concept* with a valid explanatory reach (Hall, 1997, p. 47) for international news reporting in the age of digital networks?

The end of the Cold War represented the decline of a news frame for international relations and, for that matter, for international news. Until then much reporting was outlined by emphasizing the superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. After this period, studies show that "Eastern Europe, including the former Soviet Union and its client states in the Warzaw Pact, has almost disappeared from the information map" of international agencies (Giffard, 2000, p. 406).

Admittedly, "with the end of Cold War, the geopolitical truisms that shaped news judgments as well as government policy were open to revision" (Seib, 2002, p. xi). From these geopolitical transformations, it has been recognized that "storylines without clear good and bad guys are difficult to deliver. Without the old cold war frame that wrapped much of international news, journalists have frequently experienced difficulties delivering clear explanatory narratives" (Chakars, 2009, p. 768).

The decline of Cold War as a master concept also had an impact in the geography and distribution of international news bureaus: "The Cold War is over. International bureaus are too costly. A handful of international hub bureau cities serve well as a jumping-off point for covering the world. There's not enough broadcast time to adequately report on the world" (E. Jordan, 1999, p. 7).

This contemporary trend often leads to the argument that international news are falling by the wayside (McLeary, 2006) or, in other words, retreating from the world (Enda, 2011). This consideration has even led the United Nations in 2004 to start publishing a list of the world's 10 most under-reported stories[6].

Utley (1997) shows how much between the end of the 1980s and the mid-1990s foreign bureaus, foreign policy coverage and overseas news has been shrinking in U.S.

[6] The available lists from 2004 to 2008 can be consulted at http://www.un.org/en/events/tenstories/08/

television (ABC, CBS, NBC). Other authors also support that the serious cutbacks started precisely at the end of Cold War (Carter, 1992; Sreberny & Paterson, 2004). This is now a reported tendency, at least, for the last fifteen years (E. Jordan, 1999): "Big Western news enterprises are cutting their international budgets and bureaus, banking on lighter, cheaper to- produce local fare, rather than costly, challenging foreign coverage. Consequently there is concern about isolationism in media" (Chakars, 2009, p. 767).

Cutbacks in international news bureaus are frequently attributed to high expenditure and financial pressure. While "an average newspaper foreign bureau costs between $200,000 and $300,000 a year", at the same time authors argue that "good quality foreign news coverage (…) adds significant value to a medium, but in ways that can't always be directly measured by net profits. Higher quality employees, greater credibility and exclusive stories are all a result of having one's own staff providing good quality foreign news coverage" (Carroll, 2007, p. 2).

From this it has been more recently suggested that "foreign bureaus staffed by correspondents from a newspaper or broadcast network are now largely relics of a bygone era. As this 20th century model of reporting fades, fresh approaches to international reporting are evolving" (Nieman, 2010).

Despite a perceived trend for closures, there are still major modern news organizations with a considerable international structure of reporting. For instance, Thomson Reuters keeps 196 bureaus, serving approximately 131 countries, The Associated Press is still present in more than 120 countries (D. Schlesinger, 2009, pp. 22-23), BBC kept until recently 200 foreign correspondents worldwide and 400-plus occasional correspondents (Phil Harding, 2009, p. 23), CNN Worldwide maintains 45 editorial operations (14 U.S. based, 31 internationally) ("CNN Worldwide Fact Sheet," 2011) – suggesting that international news reporting ecosystem is in a clear state of fluidity.

A recent study on the British press based on content analysis has also found that foreign coverage has fallen by almost 40% since 1979 to 2009, registering a decline in absolute and relative number of international news stories – despite of the growth in newspaper size in number of pages and news stories – suggesting the emergence of a new foreign news ecology and noticing that "political reporting of the two superpowers of the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, has not been replaced by extensive multipolar reporting" (Moore, 2010, p. 25), leading to the difficulty of getting foreign scoops.

In a personal interview with the author, Alfred Hermida advances two emerging contemporary trends in international news reporting:

> One is the mainstream media, the established media, cutting back of foreign coverage, on having correspondents based on bureaus abroad; the other is that we are actually seeing far much international reporting taking place, but it is just that it is not taking place following the previous model of foreign correspondent, when organizations such as the BBC would have somebody based in a capital that would be responsible for covering that region. Instead, that foreign reporting is coming from people in the country; some of them are journalists, some of them are not necessarily professional journalists but are doing the role of journalists reporting it. So, Global Voices Online is the perfect example there (Vicente, 2011)

Looking at content, researchers also point that "contextual detail is the first victim of news 'bean-counters' as stories are shortened, research 'in-country' more limited, and dependency on superficial news agency coverage increased" (Sreberny & Paterson, 2004, p. 6).

Despite the quantitative shrinking of Euro-American news organizations international bureaus (Kumar, 2011), some authors ask if "these perceived declines accurately measure the quantity and quality of foreign reporting that actually exists?" proposing that alarm is "based on an anachronistic and static model of what foreign correspondence is and who foreign correspondents are" (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004, p. 302).

In that regard,

> The old model of access to broadcasting, confined to a few organizations with the money and resources to send people around the world, was based on limited access to technology. Whoever had that power was in a great position. Now, almost anybody anywhere can do the same thing with an Internet connection and a laptop. The basic model has been totally undercut by the internet and technology (Phil Harding, 2009, p. 38)

# CHAPTER 2 – THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS

International news reporters "have always been partial and embodied subjects limited by inadequate transport, geopolitical restrictions, specific audiences, editors, and other constraints" (Farish, 2001, p. 276). From the very early moments of its origins, journalism studies have been tracking what – how and why – news is, making an effort to go deeper than some of the earliest tentative outlines: "What is news depends upon the time and the place and the people involved. News is shaped by the past and by the future. It is shaped by environment and especially by what most of us persist in calling, in defiance of the new psychology, the will" (Johnson, 1926, p. 4).

## 2.1. The lone gatekeeper

The seminal work of White (1950) established the concept of a "gatekeeper"[7] in journalism research: the individual or group making the decision between what will be left in or out the information chain. In these metaphorical terms, news flow through "gates" of decision. White's study underlines "how highly subjective, how reliant upon value-judgments based on the 'gate-keeper's' own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations the communication of 'news' really is" (p. 65).

Almost one decade later, Gieber (1964) took a step further by moving the research from a practically exclusive consideration of *personal subjectivity* towards the identification of the standardized process through which 16 daily newspapers' wire editors in Wisconsin (USA) selected the news. The study shows how professionals were focused on the mechanical procedures rather than demonstrating a critical evaluation or social meanings of the news.

Within the scope of international news reporting, foreign correspondents are often regarded as acting "as a kind of 'gatekeepers' who select, gather and report foreign news for their home audiences" (Chen, 1995, p. 5).

[7] From Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in Group Dynamics: II. Channels of Group Life; Social Planning and Action Research *Human Relations, 1*(2), 131-140.

Although limited in sociological scope, White's research already recognizes – yet, not explores further – "the pressure of a working nigh" (1950, p. 70). In this sense, we can anticipate the center of research attention moving towards more organizational considerations, as subsequently pointed by Schudson (1989, p. 265):

> A problem with the metaphor is that it leaves 'information' sociologically untouched, a pristine material that comes to the gate already prepared (…) the metaphor individualizes a bureaucratic phenomenon and implicitly transforms organizational bias into individual subjectivity (…) news items are not simply selected but constructed. The gatekeeper metaphor describes neither this nor the feedback loops in which generators of information for the press anticipate the criteria of the gatekeepers in their efforts to get through the gate.

A whole body of studies on international journalism builds upon the "gatekeeper" paradigm, incorporating in their conceptual and methodological considerations the recognition of an over-simplified approach based only in personal subjectivity and looking at the constraining factors overhanging "gatekeepers".

In her analysis of American press coverage of Indochina war, Welch (1972) highlights some organizational explanations for the behavior of the press, concluding that:

> Any organization has characteristics that shape and reinforce the attitudes of those who are part of it, and thereby influence the content of decisions made. Despite, or because of, the hierarchical structure of organizations that gives particular individuals key roles in decision-making, these decisions are made within an organizational context (…) This capacity to absorb uncertainty is not an isolated occurrence in an organizational structure, simply because each person in a subordinate level of authority wants to appear more certain of his information than he actually is. When it is possible, an individual will also want the information that he is relying not to conflict with beliefs and notions previously and strongly held by those in higher levels of the organization (pp. 227-228)

Perceptions of reality by the "gatekeepers" are then ordered in relation to its role within the organization, defined as "the social, formal, usually economic entity that employs the media worker in order to produce media content" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 144).

This process of judgment and selection – uncertainty absorption trough a preestablished program of action – underline different layers of organizational constraints in news selection considering the existence of a chain of information and a hierarchic structure of editorial authority: for instance, the previously referred editorial staff, producers, foreign correspondents, stringers, fixers, and freelancers.

This organizational turn in the study of international journalism – the organization is now considered the gatekeeper – highlights the nonlinear processes in place in foreign news selection towards a cybernetic gatekeeping model (G. J. Robinson, 1970) centered on "a complex communication-decision network populated by members of a trained and socialized subculture". This subculture crosses formal organizational boundaries and is expressed through formal and informal communication-decision networks (Bailey & Lichty, 1972, pp. 228-229).

In this light, the reporter is an *active organization man* involved in processes of socialization *in* and *out* the newsroom:

> The larger news organizations have all the principal attributes of bureaucracies. They have a division of labor along functional and geographic lines. Functionally, newsmen specialize as editors, general assignment reporters, or reporters covering a specific substantive are such as economics, sports, society, or the arts. Geographically, they are arranged in bureaus in various parts of the world (Sigal, 1973, p. 3).

Within these analyses of organizational constraints, a *cultural factor* began to emerge. In her study on "foreign news gatekeepers" in *The Times*, based on a mail questionnaire administered to 98 news workers in London and abroad who gather and process foreign news, Peterson (1979) finds that "gatekeepers" show a consensus in their news choices, but that "cultural differences exist among British and foreign staff":

> Newsmen socialized to the news norms of Europe and North America, but born and educated in other parts of the world, diverge somewhat from those news norms. Different cultural regions doubtless maintain varied perceptual maps of the world, and the press aids in sustaining those divergent perceptions (p. 125)

Peterson's article is informed by Galtung and Ruge's (1965) seminal study on *The Structure of Foreign News* in which both researchers, based on the news content from four Norwegian newspapers, and departing from the consideration of world as a geographic structure divided in nations, listed 10 news factors (properties of events[8]) structuring the coverage of three crisis: Congo (1960), Cuba (1960) and Cyprus (1964).

This research trend is considered seminal to the debates on a New World Information and Communication Order, during the 1970s and the 1980s, that paved the way for inquiries on the determinant factors of international news circulation (e.g., Ahern, 1984; Chang, Shoemaker, & Brendlinger, 1987; Golan, 2010) communication flows and

[8] As in Galtung & Ruge (1965): Frequency, Threshold, Unambiguity, Meaninfulness, Domestic News, Consonance, Unexpectedness, Elitism, Personalization, Negativity

news selection (e.g., Allen, 2005; Gaunt, 1989; Reta, 1998; Rosengren, 1970; Wilke, 1987; Yang, 1995) as well as on the image of foreign countries representing different social systems and development stages as portrayed by mass media: "Since the news media are important arbiters of reality, not only at the mass level but also amongst decision-makers, distorted images of the international scene could be a major obstacle for those trying to solve the problems at issue between North and South" (Sreberny-Mohammadi, Nordenstreng, Stevenson, & Ugboajah, 1985, p. 7).

Since Galtung and Ruge's study represents a highly influential reference inside the field of international journalism studies, there are important limitations to be considered, respecting the authors' conceptions of the news production process and their methodology.

A first problem concerns the adopted analytical stance of news media as non-personal indivisible entities, with an option by "not distinguish between the journalist in the field in the news-sending country, the local press agency bureau, the district bureau, the central bureau of the press agency, the district bureau of the receiving end, the local bureau in the news-receiving country, the news editor in the receiving newspaper, the layout man" (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, p. 65).

Although methodological helpful, by diminishing the amount of variables to be considered and studied – e.g. news values, beliefs, socialization in the newsroom, routines, beat structure, culture – this path shadows the real complexities of international journalism and notably subsumes the hypothesis of a quantitative and qualitative diversity of personal and organizational actors in international news reporting. As a consequence, and as noted by Hjarvard (2002), this limitation reflects an inadequate theoretical construction of the empirical object, since "it is not clear what kind of social process in the real world is being uncovered by the analytical use of the news factors. It may be processes at the micro, meso, or macro-level, and it may be social phenomena as different as economic, journalistic, political, ideological, or psychological aspects of the news production process" (p. 94).

From this, one methodological observation is also required. Although the news factors are understood as selection criteria, the chosen methodology consists of a quantitative analysis of the news as a final product, implicitly promoting an artificial distinction between the published news, producers and the specific news production process: "Their hypothesis as well as their factors are based on the assumption that, in

news from and about the Western world, there is a high degree of uniformity across countries, types of media, political and cultural traditions" (p. 95).

Assigning a similar relevance to the properties of the event, Molotch and Lester (1974) define what news is – how they are constructed in relation to the notion of public times[9] – by considering "the circumstances of the promotion work which makes them [the events] available to publics" (p. 106). A typology is built: routine, accident, scandal and serendipity. By focusing their analytical focus on the promotion of events, authors reject the objectivity assumption in journalism – there is no *real world* to be objective about; news doesn't reflect the *reality out there*, but production practices. In this condition, "public events are held to exist because of the practical purposes they serve, rather than because of their inherent objective importance. The news content of mass media is seen as the result of practical, purposive, and creative activities on the part of news promoters, news assemblers and news consumers" (p. 101).

From an individualist gatekeeping perspective on international news reporting, "gate keepers" include now, for instance, the overseas bureaus staff, central desk workers, wire editors. It is relevant to note that in this light "editor's perceptions of foreign news factors are determined by individual differences and organizational constraints in the newsroom" (Chang & Lee, 1992) but are also constrained by logistical considerations, i.e., available resources (Ahern, 1984; Golding & Elliott, 1979), such as government news management, transmission costs, location of agency bureaus, technological limitations, national rank in international hierarchy, trade and distance between nations shall be considered: "Redefinition of news values at this [worldwide] level implies redeployment of resources. Wire services currently deploy their correspondents in response to market forces, which are in turn conditioned by general economic and political factors" (Ahern, 1984, p. 233).

News must then be regarded as a social construction. The organizational paradigm elaborates further the simplistic consideration of the "gate keeper's" strict subjectivity, towards bureaucratic considerations impending over the journalist's work:

> [Broadcast] journalism is by no means random reaction to random events. On the contrary, it is a highly regulated and routine process of manufacturing a cultural product on an electronic production line. In stages of planning, gathering, selection and production broadcast news is moulded by the demands of composing order and organization within a

[9] "That dimension of collective life through which human communities come to have what is assumed to be a patterned and perceptually shared past, present and future" (Molotch & Lester, 1974, p. 102)

> daily cycle. The news is made, and like any other product it carries the marks of the technical and organizational structure from which it emerges (Golding & Elliott, 1979, p. 137)

On the other hand, claiming for some caution on the generalizations taken from previous research on the systemic determinants, an organizational perspective on international news allows clarification on the fact that "any mass medium is inevitably structured and hierarchical, encompassing a variety of roles and responsibilities. (…) An organization also has to establish a set of operational norms and values so as to routinize the task" (Chu, 1985, pp. 3-4).

## 2.2. Newsgathering routines, labor division, the beat system and story ideation

As a starting point, we shall stand on the distinction between *news organizations* – editorial departments employing primarily journalists – and larger *media organizations* that may be the institutional framework for more than one news organization, working across plural types of media – newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television – and producing not just news, but also other forms of communication (Tunstall, 1971, p. 6)[10].

News routines are constituted by "those patterned, routinized, repeated practices and forms that media workers use to do their jobs" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 105). Within the news organization they work for, or even in the case of freelancers, these routinized procedures are present as an answer to the constraints imposed by a hierarchy of influences, specifically technology, deadlines, space and norms (Reese, 2001).

Previous studies have shown that structure and labor division (Tuchman, 1978) as well as beat structure (Fishman, 1980) are determinant factors in news production. In this sense, "news is both an individual product and an organizational product" (L. B. Becker & Vlad, 2009, p. 59).

As showed by Breed (1955) socialization in the newsroom and supervisor's influences are important factors to be considered in studying news production. Although the publisher and/or owner representative does set news policy – "the more or less consistent orientation shown by a paper, not only in its editorial but in its columns and

[10] Although we are departing from Tunstall distinction, we shall signalize that in his study the author "does not include such technicians as printers or tv cameramen" (Tunstall, 1971, p. 6). As we will be analyzing later on, this previous distinction poses now some limitations in the light of the contemporary notion of convergence.

headlines as well" (p. 327) – one cannot automatically conclude they are strictly followed by staff for three reasons:

> (1) the existence of ethical journalistic norms; (2) the fact that staff subordinates (reporters, etc.) tend to have more "liberal" attitudes (and therefore perceptions) than the publisher and could invoke the norms to justify anti-policy writing; and (3) the ethical taboo preventing the publisher from commanding subordinates to follow policy (Breed, 1955, p. 326)

In this sense, journalists' work lives in a possible permanent tension between the organizational guiding policy, their technical – news gathering, writing, and editing – and ethical professional norms – ideals such as responsibility, impartiality, accuracy, fair play, and objectivity. These have been termed as the two professionalisms of journalism (Ornebring, 2009). Breed found that staffers learn their job policy, although it is often not explicitly taught through training programs or stated despite the existence of a style book – then regarded more as dealing with literary style and not with policy.

(Un)conformity to news policy is achieved as "the recruit discovers and internalizes the rights and obligations of his status and its norms and values" (p. 328). Recognizing the possibility of some form of punishment, journalists may censor themselves considering standard procedures. Studying the reasons for conforming the policy, Breed calls our attention to the fact that "the staffer must be seen in terms of his status and aspirations, the structure of the newsroom organization and of the larger society" (p. 329), identifying not only 1) institutional authority and sanctions, but also 2) feelings of obligation and esteem for, 3) mobility aspirations, 4) the absence of conflicting group allegiance, 5) the pleasant nature of the activity and 6) the news as a value, as interconnected factors.

Recent studies on the cognitive selection of news elements have revealed that globalization is operating at the journalistic standards level, being "possible that some core narratives are so deeply embedded in the journalists that the narratives are more or less automatically applied. Journalists simply learn to embed the newsroom's dominant cultural and social paradigm in the course of their work" (Zhong & Newhagen, 2009, p. 603), towards a global standard for objective reporting.

Editorial actions – based on Breed's work, one may argue policy orientations and, ultimately, social control by the reference group[11] – operate through the relations between editors and staff – and between younger and older staff reporters. That is also the case

[11] Introducing the concept, Breed refers specifically the case of "executives and veteran staffers" (1955, p. 332), trying to understand how legitimate authority is built inside the newsroom.

regarding international news reporting, where news organization roles are also assigned. With respect to the degree of control editors exercise over reportage by American correspondents in Japan, Nosaka (1992) found that none of the 29 reporters recognized a strong control, but rather an occasional (19), moderate (7) or even no control (2); one respondent did not answered the question.

In his groundbreaking ethnography of foreign correspondents in El Salvador, Pedelty (1995) recognizes how hierarchical regimes of production and distribution are in place, most notably between an A Team (organization staff) and a B Team (stringers working with staff): "Tensions indicate the importance of the hierarchical stringer/staff system, an issue almost completely ignored by academic researchers despite the fact that it plays a fundamental role in structuring the activities of foreign correspondents" (p. 70).

More recent research depicting Iraq war (2003) also found that "there is a common core of agreement about the nature of the fixer's role, and some variation in estimation of the relative importance of certain elements of it" (Palmer & Fontan, 2007, p. 10).

Therefore, "news departments may be organizationally buffered, but pressures can still be brought to bear. These influences are often subtle and unspoken, yet help enforce corporate policy" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 158).

As authority is exercised within news organizations, news can be regarded as frames constituted within "complex organizations subject to certain inevitable processes" assembled by "newsworkers as professionals with professional concerns", emphasizing "the ways in which professionalism and decisions flowing from professionalism are a result of organizational needs". From here, news is 1) an institutional method of making information available to consumers; 2) an ally of legitimate institutions; 3) is located, gathered, and distributed by professionals working in organizations (Tuchman, 1978, pp. 3-4).

Following this understanding of news as professionally built knowledge, i.e. considering how news are constructed within organizations through occupational concerns and institutional practices, by looking at "how a society comes to know itself" based on participant observation of staff reporters and their supervisor work on a newspaper (The Purissima *Record*, California), Fishman uncovers how any theme in the news functions as an organizing concept: "They allow one to see diverse incidents as related insofar as they can be seen as instances of some encompassing theme. News themes allow editors to organize

an otherwise confusing array of events into packages or groups of interrelated news (…) Themes give news shows and newspapers a presentational order" (Fishman, 1980, pp. 5-6).

This conceptual organization of themes is a crucial first step to sort reality from the larger amount of "facts" or "events", in the author's own words, to manufacture the news. From this, the editor's assignment is build and, from that point, the reporter's beat enters in action. The beat system of news is so widespread that "*not* using beats is a distinctive feature of being an experimental, alternative, or underground newspaper" (p. 27). Reporters who do not generate news from a beat work are called of general assignment.

The distinctive beat system corresponds not only to a professional specialization – an area of expertise – inside journalism and, for a matter of precision, inside the news production routines. It is institutionalized[12] through routine newsgathering processes and it operates closer relations with specific sources. As a routine procedure for covering news 1) a beat has a history in the news organization that outlives the organizational histories of the individuals who work the beat; 2) supervisors assign reporters to their beats. The reporter is responsible for, and has jurisdiction over, covering the beat. But the reporter does not own that beat; 3) the beat is a complex *object of reporting* consisting of a domain of activities occurring outside the newsroom and consists of something more than random assortments of activities (Fishman, 1980, p. 28).

We can see three layers of meaning operating inside the beat system: an organizational history, an occupation craft with specific codes of conduct and ethics and a topical and territorial sequential framing mechanism for reducing complexity. Welch's previous notion of "uncertainty absorption" (1972) has just been extended.

Research suggests that a key process in news' construction is story suggestion or ideation, the process through which journalists generate the ruling ideas the story must follow reflect the organizing concepts that frame their work while building public knowledge[13]. In order to do this they need to "keep up with what is going on in the beats they patrol or in the areas of the country assigned to their bureaus, and they are evaluated in part by their ability to suggest suitable stories" (Gans, 1979, p. 87).

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[12] We follow Tuchman's (1978) use of institution as "a routinized pattern of transactions or behavior that fulfills some function. Thus news as an institution enables consumers to learn about the social world" and of "organization" as referring to "complex social establishments. Complex organizations are, though, legitimated social institutions" (p. 4)

[13] Gans (1979, p. 156) proposes a typology of "interesting stories" for journalists: people stories, role reversals, human-interest stories, exposé anedoctes, hero stories, "gee-whiz" stories

Ideas may come from various sources (Bantz, McCorkle, & Baade, 1980, p. 54). Recent research combining newsroom ethnography and computer-assisted writing process analysis – and doing so, putting the journalist's writing practices in the center – reinforced the idea that journalism is an interpretive practice and that news production is "a process of entextualization involving multiple actors who struggle over authority, ownership and control" (Hout & Jacobs, 2008).

The implicit questions are then how do journalists generate ideas and who are the "story suggesters" (Gans, 1979, p. 87)? In this sense, if from an organization historical point of view news beats may be regarded as structuring newsgathering – they help fulfill a function – from the scope of the individual they shall also "be seen as one way of generating story ideas" (L. B. Becker & Vlad, 2009, p. 65).

Through a "wave of publicity" news media focuses public attention on an issue and formulate that issue at the same time. On other words, "news imparts to occurrences their *public character* as it transforms mere happenings into publicly discussable events" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 3).

Since frequently citizens don't have the means to directly access sources they must base their assessment about *reality* in media's formulations. On other words, "journalists relate to the rest of us those things to which we should pay attention, but to which we do not otherwise have access" (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006, p. 3). That is particularly clear in the field of international news reporting, particularly due to audiences' geographic distance from events.

Confronted with two or more depictions of facts – the perspectival nature of events – journalists resort to a triangulation as a framework for news (Fishman, 1980). This means that "reporters will not consider that different versions of events indicate different realities" (p. 117), but often different accounts of the same event, evaluated in terms of position (physical and/or temporal), competence (innate and/or experiential) and interest.

This finding allows us to see how the relationship with and the use of information sources is closely related to a notion of objectivity as a strategic ritual (Tuchman, 1972): newsmen claim objectivity by citing procedures – for instance, quotation – in order to mitigate continual pressures as deadlines possible libel suits and anticipated reprimands or sanctions from hierarchic superiors. Tuchman's study, based on participant observation, recognizes that objectivity operates through four strategic procedures: 1) the presentation of conflicting possibilities; 2) the presentation of supporting evidence; 3) the judicious use

of quotation marks and 4) by structuring information in an appropriate sequence. Complementarily, Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 112) regard the "routine of objectivity" as a prime example of a defensive routine through which journalists prevent the audience of being offended.

Studying the work of foreign reporters in El Salvador, Pedelty (1995) concludes that

> While the rules of objective journalism prohibit reporters from making subjective interpretations, their task demands it. A 'fact', itself a cultural construct, can only be communicated through placement in a system of meaning shared by reporter and reader. Journalists cannot resolve this contradiction between professional myth and practice, only manage it through judicious use of news frames (p. 7)

For this reason, Altschull (1984) argues that objectivity has its own cession rules, being more clearly the norm when reporting on domestic events and being permeable to parochial considerations and the national interest when reporters are working on international issues: "The code of objectivity appears to be operative only within the geographical limits of the United States. When the United States is in collision with another nation, it is not necessary to give 'both sides' to the dispute equal attention: to do so is to be unpatriotic" (p. 132).

In this specific field of inquiry, framing research has consolidated a well-built body of literature showing how frequently reporters' over-use of official and administrative sources corresponds to mirror official point of views, leading to accountability gaps in international news, "the weak relationship between the frames dominating the news and the facts on the ground essential to rationally evaluating the policy" (Entman, Livingston, & Kim, 2009, p. 690).

From looking at news as being held to distinct processes of organizational and professional reduction of complexity, previous research has shown the limitations of the positivist uptake on an objectivity reality and, consequently, of the restrictions of consider reporter's work to capture or picture *the* reality. However, that notion is still "widely accepted within the industry itself (…) evidencing the limited practical influence of the seminal early analyses of news" (Sreberny & Paterson, 2004, p. 17).

It has also been argued that the assumption that particular real world events have no special weight on defining what news is has been overstated by researchers (Schudson, 2005, p. 181). This is a crucial argument since it has been suggested that international news

journalism has methaphorical resemblances "to the one eyed Cyclops: news organizations only address one major crisis at a time, attributing this to limited audience attention" (Mody, 2010, p. 319).

For these reasons, further studies are needed readdressing the foundational work of Galtung and Ruge (1965) on the properties of the events, relating it with knowledge from organizational and professionalism literature, and re-elaborate them in the scope of the more recent findings concerning convergence and transformations in microelectronics. In this regards, McCombs (2004) supports that the agenda of news organizations is defined by the intervention of major sources, other news organizations, and professional journalism's norms. Let us now examine some of these "indexing" elements (Bennett, 1990).

### 2.3. Sources, access, codes of ethics, deadlines and competition

Research on the organizational and occupational constraints in the construction of news considers facts as "pertinent information gathered by professionally validated methods specifying the relationship between what is known and how it is known" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 82). Those methods of validation are based in professional journalism norms[14] (Bennett, 1996). Ryfe (2006) operates a further crucial distinction by stating that news rules are assumptions or expectations about constitutive rules – that tell journalists what the news is – and regulative rules – that tell them how the news ought to be produced.

These norms and rules orient journalists' relations with information sources, "that person or organization which either passes information to a journalist or arranges for the journalist to witness the event in question, and whose motives for facilitating journalism are always open to question" (Palmer & Fontan, 2007, p. 5).

Transformation or consistency regarding reporters' professional norms helps the researcher to understand the underlying principles of the newsgathering work:

> Consistency in the news is ensured by the fact that reporters routinely offer certain kinds of justifications for their actions. This is to say, when their actions are called into question, they routinely appeal to the same regulative rules. Why do they do this? Because they wish to be recognized as journalists, both by others in the community of journalists and by

[14] Bennett (1996) distinguishes between professional journalism norms (objectivity, balance), political norms (accountability) and economic norms (efficacy, profit).

> themselves as members of that community. To produce news that disagrees greatly with prevailing norms would be to produce something unrecognizable to others (and even to oneself). Reporters themselves constantly patrol the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate (i.e., recognizable and unrecognizable) news (Ryfe, 2006, p. 211)

Due to the tension created between world's information abundance and news' production time and space scarcity, some of the "standardization in news content is simply the result of habits and daily work routines" (Bennett, 1996, p. 373). Objectivity as a strategic ritual reveals implicit decision rules present at the moment of deciding what sources to use when writing a specific narrative, since they are a crucial part not only in the "story's construction but also of its orientation and, ultimately, the point of view being supported in a given story" (Ross, 2007).

In this regard, research has found that "where source institutions and public relations are more influential in terms of resources and proximity, journalists are more likely to defy their own professional norm of balance and bypass the corresponding routine of equally weighting source assertions" (W. Anderson & Lowrey, 2007, pp. 397-398).

Foreign correspondents' sources can be generally divided between *primary sources,* first-hand original accounts, for instance, from public servants, non-governmental organizations, corporations, diplomats, politicians, and *secondary sources*, mainly other news media (newspapers, radios, television, websites), crucially recognizing that "news reports are based on a selective articulation of certain voices about a given topic" and that "attributes of news stories are to some extent influenced not only by journalists, but by their sources" (S. T. Kim & Weaver, 2003, p. 125).

From the ubiquitous presence of a dedicated section about journalist's relation with news sources in professional guides and stylebooks (e.g. Goldstein, 2004; Goodman & Pollack, 1997; L. Jordan, 1976; Macdowall, 1992) and ethical codes of conduct (e.g. "Ethics Codes," 2001; Status of Journalists and journalism ethics: IFJ principles," 2003), one can infer the central position of concerns regarding verification procedures in modern Western journalist's education and, from that matter, conclude that they are deeply embedded as a theoretical and practical rule of authority and credibility within journalism newsgathering routines and news discourse, i.e., within journalistic societal role (Himeboim & Limor, 2005).

Although, it must be also recognized that some authors argue that contemporary codes of ethics "hinge more on fantasy than fact: the idea that journalists control what becomes news" (McManus, 1997, p. 5).

In this regard, previous ethnographic research has also found that

> Reporters play a relatively small role in the creative process of discovery, analysis, and representation involved in news production. Instead, they are mainly conduits for a system of institutions, authoritative sources, practices, and ideologies that frame the events and issues well before they, the mythical watchdogs, have a chance to do anything resembling independent analysis or representation (Pedelty, 1995, p. 24)

The "web of facticity" and its "rules requiring unimpeachable sources and identifying those sources" (Tuchman, 1978, pp. 85-86) are strictly linked to a dynamic process of shaping the ongoing meanings in a culture (Berkowitz, 2009). Therefore, the relationship between reporters and their sources can be depicted as being adversarial, "grounded in attempts to influence public opinion, to a more neutral exchange between two parties who each can have something to gain, and finally, to a negotiation over long-term cultural meanings and ideological power" (p. 102).

Those rules are based on some generalizations. We can otherwise call them basic institutionalized verification conventions or the ideology of the profession as they represent "a paradigm, a method for accomplishing a task in a prescribed way" (Berkowitz, 2009, p. 103), regarding the validation of news production: 1) to be believed, an individual must prove his or her reliability as a news source; 2) some individuals, such as committee heads, are in a position to know more than other people in an organization; 3) institutions and organizations have procedures designed to protect both the institution and the people who come into contact with it (Tuchman, 1978, p. 93).

Since journalistic codes of ethics, as professional rules that base the underlying reasons about what and how journalists shall include or exclude from their reports, are intrinsically related to the history of the professionalization of journalism, reporters' negotiations with sources (Kjaer & Langer, 2003) depict what is called the "bureaucratic foundations of news exposure" (Fishman, 1980, pp. 44-53). At this level, a systematic organization of sources of information is materialized by regular visits from the reporter to bureaucratically organized settings, narrowing coverage to official agencies, focusing only or mainly on settings with formally organized presentations of activities.

It is crucial to distinguish here two dimensions of this bureaucratically organized world. If by one hand, *facts* and *events* are constructed and performed for journalist's news detection – clearly expressed by Boorstin's (1987) notion of pseudo-events and Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 184) concept of interest groups – on the other, and not paradoxically, it provides reporters with a cartography of relevant news sources for any topic or happening:

"This bureaucratic consciousness is invaluable for detecting news because it indicates where the reporters should position themselves to discover happenings not yet known" (Fishman, 1980, p. 51).

In his study on international news reporting from El Salvador, and following Boortin's theoretical framework, Pedelty (1995) also found that "the press conference is a dramatic, ritualized, and embodied performance through which an institution's world view is made real. It is that view or 'paradigm' which is truly in contention, not the factual matters relayed therein" (p. 122). In Molotch and Lester terms (1974) the press conference is the prototypical routine event since "the people who undertake the happening (whom we call "effectors") are identical with those who promote them into events" (p. 106).

> Eager and powerful sources which need to appear in the news first become suitable because they can always supply information, and then because they satisfy the source considerations for authoritativeness and productivity. The most regular sources develop an almost institutionalized relationship with the news organization, for beat reporters are assigned to them. The beat reporters become virtual allies of these sources, either because they develop symbiotic relationships or identify with them in a process that anthropologist call going native (Gans, 1979, p. 144)

Such a "gradation of sources" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 94) helps to explain why specific beats tends to bureaucratically consolidate specific webs of facticity in international news reporters work:

> News routines are often synched with state institutions, such as foreign, defense or economic. Briefings, press conferences, and interviews at these state institutions provide de content of foreign affairs reporting. Even when covering crises and other unexpected events, traditional news organizations habitually bring officials into the story to frame the nature of the problem and its solution (Livingston & Asmolov, 2010, p. 746)

Pedelty (1995) found that "foreign correspondents routinely rely upon elite authorities and powerful institutions as news sources" (p. 7) and that "because of editorial mandates and the narrative structure of news writing – particularly the emphasis on elites – journalists conduct most of their business in press offices, conference rooms, and local restaurants" (p. 39). This conclusion is reinforced by preceding research underlining the prevalence of official sources in news stories (Gans, 1979; Sigal, 1973).

The rule about covering stories from the standpoint of officials may be justified under the democratic accountability norm of informing people about their representatives:

> Yet if the representative process has become corrupted by interest groups, political action committees (PACs) or the inability of elected representatives to satisfy constituents (…) then this element of the normative order is under siege. Rather than change their normative rationale, however, journalists may persist in unpopular or dubious representations of politics because other norms – such as the economy of reporting official views, or professional pressures for political balance (Bennett, 1996, p. 375)

This is one reason why foreign correspondents are sometimes perceived as instrumental message transmitters in "headline diplomacy" (Seib, 1997), since they can be "used by the host and their own governments to probe sensitive policy matters or convey views which officials do not want to 'put in formal diplomatic communications'". Some correspondents are consciously aware of this role of semi-official representatives (Chen, 1995, pp. 6-7) within the field of foreign policy and that can be reasonably theoretically accommodated in the view of the interdependence between news media and foreign policy makers (Malek & Wiegand, 1997).

In this sense, the "press in its collective sense is perhaps the single most important voice in the foreign policy field; as informer, interpreter, advocate, critic" representing "a continuous and articulate link between foreign policy officials in the governments and those people on the outside who follow world events" (B. C. Cohen, 1965, p. 194).

On the other hand, since "an increasingly important component of the source routine is the expert, the person relied on by journalists to put events into context and explain the meaning of news" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 130), the subjacent questions must not only be *how do international reporters* select and get access to their sources, but also *how and why do sources gain access* to international reporters. Studies indicate that "difficulties of access are encountered by not being a member of a prestigious, internationally known news organization" (Morrison & Tumber, 1985, p. 460). Ultimately, these are two sides of the same problem, since also

> Some of those who depend regularly on the press for their understanding of international events are important officials in our government. Admittedly, the government has its Central Intelligence Agency, the military has its attaches, the State Department has its ambassadors, ministers, and consuls; and various other units their representatives, but there are many indications that these agencies would be lost without reports in the press (Maxwell, 1956, pp. 2-3)

Elite sources have been defined as being a structural limitation of traditional mainstream international news coverage: "In matters of international politics, 'official sources' are almost interchangeable with the term 'elites'" as foreign policy is mostly a

preserve of the wealthy and powerful few" (McChesney, 2002, p. 95). This consideration frames journalism as a cultural practice (Karim, 2002) and recons that hegemony is often an involuntary process supporting the status quo and the establishment when reporting on international subjects, notoriously when reporting on conflict (Liebes, 1997) and globalization (S. T. Kim & Weaver, 2003).

Previous research has recognized that "in any normal foreign-policy reporting, official sources initiate some types of news" (Welch, 1972, p. 225) and that, particularly in moments of crisis or "uncertainty about the means and motivations of those involved, news sources have the ability to determine how an event is represented to an entire society" (Mason, 2007). Due to the fact that access to sources also works as a professional mechanism for reproduction of the social status quo (Tuchman, 1978), the use of official or elite sources may also work as a mechanism for *domesticate international events*:

> The national media indigenize global news by translating it into national languages. They also frame this news by situating it within a national framework. They offer complementary news, locating the global news, which often comes from a distance, by the addition of national actors. In short, the national media make sense of global news by transforming it into national news. They also measure its importance by giving it a certain amount of space in relation to domestic, local, and other foreign news. Increasingly, because of the growing availability of global news, national media start increasing the number of news items on a conflict even if their country is not directly involved. This is the power of global news: to set the agenda for news around the world. (Rantanen, 2004, p. 301)

This domestication in international news production (Clausen, 2004), reflecting regional and/or national affiliations, it is not only expressed by the trust in the professionalism and integrity of news sources, but also by the high level of trust in correspondents (Rantanen, 2004, pp. 311-312). On the other hand, it has been observed that "professionalism [in journalism] makes official or credentiated sources the basis for news stories" (McChesney, 2002, p. 95).

Although previous research indicates that audiences prefer national and domesticated international news (Straubhaar, 2007), findings also reinforce the concern that limiting foreign news "to the immediate life context of the intended audience will not broaden the horizons of international understanding" (Mody, 2010, p. 24). As we shall see later, this problem is not separated from the fact that the intended perceived audience – foreign and/or national – also constraint international news reporters' work.

Further, if we relate the recognition of news organizations as time-machines (P. Schlesinger, 1977, p. 339) and journalists' "chronomentality" (Schudson, 1986; Traquina, 2004) it becomes clearer how "the pressure of day-to-day news coverage leaves little time for extensive background news about a current situation" (Welch, 1972, p. 226). In this sense "the news is not etched into social memory, but is merely a set of flashes that fade out quickly, to be replaced by new flashes" (J. Friedman, 2002, p. 14). Recent research has reinforced the idea that journalists negotiate an agreement on what constitutes the present, the past and the future and where the reader's hypothetical space is (Lohmus, Kouts, Konno, & Aljas, 2011).

For international news reporters this recognition is accompanied by a further time constraint, since they are often working across several time zones. One direct consequence "of reporting on breaking news for a distant news organization is that the workday becomes very long" (Hess, 2005, p. 69). Cumulatively, foreign correspondents also face the constraint of "the often temporary nature of their posting" making "the type of long-term association, so invaluable to journalists, difficult" (Morrison & Tumber, 1985, p. 461).

In summary, "newsgathering is a stop watch culture" (Ginneken, 1998, p. 113). In their study on broadcast news in Nigeria, Sweden and Ireland, Golding and Elliot (1979) already show that the shortage of time is perceived by journalists as a constraint on news production. "Many of the journalists who believed in more background and explanation in news saw time as the main enemy of their hopes" (p. 123).

Consequently, "unlike more rigorous and reflective approaches to facticity, newswork is a practical activity geared to deadlines. Facts must be quickly identified (…) In news, verification of facts is both a political and a professional accomplishment" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 83).

Although, research has also concluded for the porosity of time in foreign correspondents' routines, particularly war correspondents, since "reporters are never completely 'on' duty. They rarely act as if engaged in a serious professional endeavor, except when around sources. They often imbue their labor with a strong sense of play. The boundary between journalists' work and 'free' time is extremely porous (Pedelty, 1995, p. 113).

Several researchers and practitioners have and still call for what has recently been described as a slow news movement (Gillmor, 2009). More than twenty years ago, Elliot (1988), observing the news coverage of disasters, underlined the importance of preventive

practices in international journalism, presenting context rather than be simply reactive to unexpected events. More recently, Christians (2004) argued that we are facing a changing news paradigm from objectivity towards interpretive sufficiency, from where the "mainstream view of news as objective information is too narrow for today's social and political complexities. A more sophisticated concept is truth in journalism as authentic disclosure" (p. 46).

This claim is not free of challenges for the field work of international news reporters and, for that matter, for the more general consideration of international journalism' role in democratic societies, since it is often regarded as a test presented to "objective" reporting. In that regards, Beattie (2005) study on reporters' work in former Yugoslavia recognizes that

> Contextual reporting meant war correspondents had to take individual events happening in the conflict and place them into a wider framework of emerging patterns and relationships incorporating social, political, historical and legal concepts. War correspondents have to both consider and respond to these intellectual demands on their reporting on one hand, while confronting personal risk and fulfilling the expectations of editors and news directors back home, on the other (Beattie, 2005, p. 3)

For this reason, "pack journalism also remains a powerful constraint on implicit decisions about how to play stories" (Bennett, 1996, p. 373): reporters covering "the same" stories following a specific beat and relying on the same information sources. In this sense, news production is not only influenced by the editors in charge – the "gate keepers" – and the ruling editorial policies but also by sources and by journalists cooperating or competing as an *interpretive community*, "one united by its shared discourse and collective interpretations of key public events" (Zelizer, 1993). Journalists monitor and imitate competitor's work and other players in the journalistic field: "actors do not monitor others face-to-face but instead resort to a complex technological constellation of old and new media (…) Information learned through technologically mediated monitoring contributes to editorial decision making in a way that fuels imitation" (Boczkowski, 2010, p. 60).

For the same reason, *inter-media agenda setting* – in the jargon, "borrowed news" – has been found related with international news selection process (Golan, 2006). In his study of foreign correspondents based in Washington D.C., comparing "the responses of First World correspondents to those of Third World journalists", Ghorpade (1984) found that "media sources, including newspapers, magazines, and news agencies, were rated among the most regularly used sources". Later, also studying correspondents based in Washington

D.C, Chen (1995) supported this observation, concluding that "U.S. media are their number one news source, followed by U.S. official sources, diplomats, personal friends, and colleagues" (p. iii).

In this context, if previously local newspapers were the basic source in foreign correspondents' daily news digest, data from 1999 shows that the Internet is progressively absorbing journalists' reading habits: 45% of the foreign correspondents working in the U.S. spent 2-3 hours on the Internet using it as a research tool (Hess, 2005, p. 102). More recent studies suggest the growing importance of Internet as a source of information for international news reporters due to its cost effective characteristics (A. Knight, 2007), inferring they are less reliant on news agencies. Although, recent surveys also conclude that "traditional tools are not being abandoned by journalism professionals, but strategically fused with social media", with "social media going mainstream in the newsroom" (McClure & Middleberg, 2010). From this, one may infer that "the distinction between mass media and mass self-communication has analytical value, but only on the condition to add that the two modes of communication are interacting in the practice of communication, as communication technologies converge" (Castells, 2007, p. 252).

Competition is in place not only regarding the commercial market that constraint journalists' work towards immediacy and 24/7 news cycles (Preston & Metykova, 2009), but simultaneously within the processes of socialization in the newsroom, in relation to the reference group (Breed, 1955) and translated in the dynamics amongst the competitor-colleague group (Tunstall, 1971, p. 7), defined as a group of journalists covering a single specific news source area; their behavior is defined towards more competitive or more co-operative.

> As journalists notice each other reporting the same news theme, it becomes established within a community of media organizations. Journalists who are not yet reporting a theme learn to use it by watching their competition. And when journalists who first report a theme see others beginning to use it, they feel their original news judgment is confirmed (Fishman, 1980, p. 8)

That *competitor-colleague* relation has been depicted in studies that show that not all foreign correspondents hand over local contacts to the incoming incumbents "for the ungracious reason of not wishing their own achievements retrospectively undermined by having the new person do as well or better than themselves" being "surprising (…) the low level of help which the incoming correspondent received" (Morrison & Tumber, 1985, p. 462).

Previous research has also recognized that one direct conclusion for international news reporters' work from the First World War, was the shatter of the "individual correspondent who travelled liberally and individually, and had little difficulty translating what he (for this was a deeply masculine figure) witnessed into an authoritative geography" (Farish, 2001, p. 276).

More recently, Iraq War (2003) has renewed scholars' attention to how the actual physical risks of accessing local sources may take reporters to embody one of the warring parties and their frames. This specially concerns embedding as "a variant of the source who arranges facilitation, but in a particularly defined situation" (Palmer & Fontan, 2007, pp. 5-6). If by one hand, "the embedding system is advantageous for journalists because it provides essentially limitless access to a particular unit in addition to the use of military transport and accommodation and physical protection from harm" (Fennel, 2005, p. 61), it also comes associated with a specific vantage point channeling reporters toward particular news content (Lindner, 2009), emphasizing the soldier's experience of the war.

These findings from content analysis studies are in line with concerns on *voice* and *empowerment*, leading research to analyze "to what degree do dominant mainstream voices control the information that journalists get and how much opportunity do women and minorities have to appear in the news and shape its meanings" (Berkowitz, 2009, p. 109). Particularly regarding war coverage, it has been recognized by the practitioners themselves that

> embedding comes with the peril of seeing conflict overwhelmingly through the eyes of the U.S. military. That inevitably has a distorting impact on the coverage. (…) More and more the coverage [of Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts] is seen through the eyes of the military, American and Western officials in general. And there's a corresponding absence of voices from those countries themselves (Vicente & ACEP, 2010, pp. 73-76)

If information sources may subtly influence the news "by providing the context within which all other information is evaluated, by providing usable information that is easier and cheaper to use than that from other sources (…) and by monopolizing the journalist's time" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 178), they can also do it through more explicit mechanisms.

Previous research has also identify constraints for foreign reporters' newsgathering work when authorities (try to) close or limit journalists' access to official information sources. In his study about American foreign correspondents in Japan, Nosaka (1992) found that press clubs (*kisha* clubs) were "a key place of news-gathering. The members of

press clubs obtain official news generated by the government and other agencies very easily, but non-members do not. Foreign correspondents in Japan are not members of the clubs" (p. 1), giving floor for accusations of information cartelization.

### 2.4. Cross-cultural constraints

International news reporters work along contact zones, "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other (…) the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations"[15] (Pratt, 2008, pp. 7-8), i.e., areas of cross-cultural exchange and contest.

As international reporters need to be aware of the historical and socio-cultural background in societies they cover, the ambiguity of these contact zones is expressively exemplified by a question: "Even if a journalist is well-informed about another culture how does she interpret events in it to produce a coherent account for the reader at home—without losing herself completely in the Other's discourse or conversely lapsing into an ethnocentric narrative?" (Karim, 2002, p. 111).

Reflecting on those genuine "global narratives that are not monolithic but pluralistic, in which cultures are not arranged hierarchically" (p. 112) JanMohamed (1992) frames the discussion between the notions of a syncretic border intellectual, "able to combine elements of the two cultures in order to articulate new syncretic forms and experiences", and the specular border intellectual that "while perhaps equally familiar with two cultures, finds himself or herlself unable or unwilling to be 'at home' in these societies" (p. 97).

These are useful concepts framing the work of international news reporters, since "in this condition of being in one place and reporting from there to people who are elsewhere (…) at least a degree of cosmopolitanism, a sensitivity to difference and a concern with how to report on it, may be more or less a professional requirement" (Hannerz, 2007, p. 305).

Taking into account that international news reporting has its own inherent challenges, specifically "problems of language acquisition, source development and access,

[15] In the original context of her study on colonization/decolonization and travel writing, the author adds to this definition: "usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (p. 8), since the term it is, in that context, often used as a synonym for "colonial frontier" (p. 9).

bias, stereotypes, deadline pressure, and financial expense" (Chakars, 2009, p. 767), three sources for journalists' socialization have been recognized: culture, professionalism and vertical hierarchy (Ginneken, 1998).

Considering their cultural place in time and space

> At least at times, foreign correspondents, like anthropologists, presumably have to deal in one way or other with questions of "cultural translation" or "representing otherness". Yet their relationships to time and space in the reporting situation, their collegial relationships, and their organizational embedding are different from those of anthropological fieldworkers—and their reporting usually reaches much wider audiences (Hannerz, 1998, p. 548)

Even if in a different context[16], the difficulties and limitations of portraying the life experience of others have been noticed: "We may not rewrite the other's world or impose upon it a conceptual framework that extracts it what fits with ours. Their reality, their varieties of experience, must be an unconditional datum. It is the place from which inquiry begins" (Smith, 1990, p. 25). In these terms, international workers – among them, international news reporters – may tend to interpret and explain local complexities and ambivalences through their own repertory of stereotypes and previous categorizations.

> This typically occurs when First World journalists arrive in a Second or Third World country for a quick piece of reportage, and have to deal with the local administration. They will soon feel it is bureaucratic (slow, paper-based, etc) and authoritarian (hierarchical). Their counterparts, by contrast, may feel they are arrogant and disrespectful (asking for special treatment and immediate access. Both reactions are rooted in the normal way of doing things within each organizational culture, which is logical and legitimate from its own point of view, but not from the other's (Ginneken, 1998, p. 71)

While involved in *intercultural communication*, taken here as one type of intergroup communication based on a "transactional, symbolic process involving the attribution of meaning between people from different cultures" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 17), "journalists, then, have on one hand internalized the civilization, language, nation, ethnic group, social class, age cohort and gender they belong to – with all this implies; and, on the other hand, their status as 'knowledge-producers' and 'news-gatherers'" (Ginneken, 1998, p. 66).

As stated by Chakars (2009)

> Western foreign correspondents frequently huddle around expatriate communities as well as form their own. They often do not know local languages, especially when in more

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> remote locations. Often they cultivate relationships with Westernized elites with whom they feel comfortable and whom they can more easily understand. This insularity may compound cultural biases and narrow the lens through which places and issues may be viewed. The lens is often brought from home and the foreign locale or story is measured against home-based foreign policy positions (pp. 767-768)

Personal backgrounds also influence reporters work, even if they tend to be controlled by professional norms: "Who they are and where they came from can have a sometimes subtle, sometimes profound effect on how they choose to report events" (Brady, 2003, p. 15).

Previous studies examining the role of culture in the work foreign correspondents (cultural framing) concluded that reporters are generally aware of this influence, even if operating "at an unconscious or intuitive level", suggesting that "journalists striving for a a clear understanding of events in another culture should utilize methods that are sensitive to local conditions and, to some extent, that attempt to portray other cultures on their own terms rather than merely through the cultural filters of the journalist" (Starck & Villanueva, 1992, p. 3).

More recent investigations, following the events of September 11, 2001 in the U.S., show that foreign correspondents sometimes consider that the multicultural model doesn't work, revealing a clash of civilizations in their coverage of Muslim communities in Europe (Hahn & Lonnendonker, 2009, p. 510). This coverage is sometimes even regarded as a clash of cultures as a shortcoming in foreign correspondents' work (Masterton, 2009).

Within an organizational level, scholar examinations have also reported dynamics and culture clashes inside international bureaus, looking ahead to the ongoing transformations in the field and concluding that although Western journalists continue to be prevalent in international reporting, there are indications that a synthesis is beginning to emerge towards a more relevant role of local correspondents, while also underlining the difficulties of the insider writing on conflict events in their own country (Bunce, 2010).

On the other hand, research on women's rights during the coverage of operation Enduring Freedom, in Afghanistan, shows that "Afghan women were invariably the subjects rather than the agents of such debates" concluding that "regardless of their gender, the vast majority of journalists reporting the 2001 conflict failed to recognize and confront the co-option of women's rights for the purpose of justifying military aggression on humanitarian grounds" (Fowler, 2007, p. 4).

International news reporters are key players in cross-cultural communication (Starck & Villanueva, 1992, p. 4) and their work has been conceptualized as mediating and translating cultures, since "they have to frame and contextualize current affairs and events happening abroad in order to help media consumers at home evaluate and order them in a particular context to avoid misunderstandings and misperceptions" (Beliveau, et al., 2011, p. 130).

Studies have even address proposals towards lifelong learning opportunities for foreign correspondents, admitting that "reportage that is sensitive to the social, cultural and political characteristics that define nations is getting lost as a result of changing practices and technological advances" (d'Entremont & Dougall, 1999, p. 92) in international news reporting. Researchers have also depicted international educational programs in order to bring journalism students implications of their professional preparation (Duffield, 2008; Pathak-Shelat & Desai-Chopra, 2011).

Conceptualizing news translation as gatekeeping (Vuorinen, 1997), research on the linguistic translation skills of news agencies has underlined a dual coverage structure: on the one hand, foreign correspondents producing news reports in the domestic language of the agency; on the other, local journalists (re)writing news in order to make them available for the local market. Bielsa (2007) has found that "news translation is doubly invisible, not just because of the need to adopt a domesticating strategy that values fluency and hides its very intervention, but also because of the fact that translation has been successfully integrated within journalism" (p. 151).

## 2.5. Audiences and journalists' audience perception

Contrary to other occupational routines "journalists do not meet with individual clients, and so the journalists' client is an 'everyclient' or 'average client'" (W. Anderson & Lowrey, 2007, p. 389). From this recognition, a question arises: journalists are newsgatherers for whom? (Tunstall, 1971). The question clearly states the central role for journalists' perceptions regarding their audiences/publics, "the god term of journalism (…) without which nothing counts" (Carey, 2007, p. 12). Even if "audience is an abstract and debatable term that does not denote an identifiable social collectivity" (Metykova, 2009, p. 129).

Studies made in the 1950s already recognize that "newspaper readers possess

potential power over press performance" (Breed, 1955, p. 334). Although, since then little attention from researchers has been given to the means through which audiences may influence the work of foreign correspondents and the production of international news (Philo, 2004), embracing the recognition that there is a crucial set of relationships which must not be forgotten: "Those to their audiences – readers, viewers, listeners. If one aspect of globalization is a globalization of consciousness (…) foreign correspondents, through these relationships, must be among its more significant agents" (Hannerz, 2007, p. 301).

Journalists usually use the public interest as a justification for their work. Even if this notion is difficult to define and often taken as a synonym of "the common good"[17], professions often use it in self-serving ways. Journalism and its often uncertain or ill-defined notion of public duty is no exception. These doubtful definitions are troubling since they reinforce "professional ethics as an ideological smoke-screen masking economic self-interest and social power" (Jennings, et al.):

> Journalism is a striking example of the way a profession can shape our society's values and self-understanding. The information and analysis journalists provide enable the rest of us to participate more effectively as citizens in a democracy. But what kind of information is important, and how much analysis is required? Who should be heard? And how should we understand what we hear? The journalism profession cannot ignore these questions. Journalists are never simply neutral conduits of information. Inevitably they select, interpret, and place the news in a particular context. As they perform these professional tasks, journalists are – and should be – guided by a conception of the public interest and the common good (Jennings, et al., 1987, p. 8)

Previous research has pointed towards the typologies of the public interest idea, organizing the concept between a preponderance theory ("where the sum of individual interests is held to paramount"), the common interest ("where the interests in question are ones which *all* members are *presumed* to have in common") and a unitary theory ("the assertion of some absolute normative principle, usually deriving from some larger social theory or ideology") (McQuail, 1992, pp. 22-23).

In other words, journalists' perception of their audiences operates as a defining

[17] Jennings et al. differentiate the two concepts by stating that the "public interest" refers to a more individualistic orientation – "the profession's contribution of technical expertise to public policy analysis, an indirect service to society that is a byproduct of service to individual members of society" - and that "the common good" is promoted by services that contribute to "that ongoing, pluralistic conversation in a democracy society about our shared goals, our common purposes, and the nature of the good life in a just social order" (p. 6).While they may coincide they also relate with two distinct philosophical stances in political thought: on one side, liberalism, utilitarianism and democratic pluralism, on the other communitarianism and civic republicanism. Authors suggest that journalism' relation to its audience can only be fully understood through the lenses of "the common good".

mechanism within news production. In the case of international news reporters, they need to relate to *the audience at home* since their work is based in ambivalence: They are stationed in one place and are reporting to another.

If audiences are the prime addressees of journalists' work – and consequently, audiences' interest – one crucial question is to know the extent to which they are unaware of them. Accordingly, if it is to be securely demonstrated that "the primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing" (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2001, p. 12), then one shall recognize that the body of knowledge that journalists can aggregate about their audiences is one of crucial relevance when defining the news work.

If "a cybernetic organization functions with consideration to its environment" (Bailey & Lichty, 1972, p. 229), audiences are a relevant factor to consider. Research examining the triangular relationship among what editors regard as important, the audiences' preferences and foreign media coverage has found that "news editors and directors not always see eye to eye with the audiences", suggesting that "half of the times journalists' worldview and audience interest do not necessarily converge in the journalistic arena" (Tai & Chang, 2002, p. 258)

In his classical study, Gans (1979) already concluded that journalists not only have access to formal feedback and they use it only rarely (p. 230) because they have fear of their potential power (p. 234); they also tend to recognize their audience as virtually middle-class and one typically most affluent and well educated perhaps to raise their own status (pp. 238-239).

Little more than a decade after the study by Gans, this consideration for the public interest has been in the heart of theory and practice of civic/public journalism, in the beginnings of the 1990s in the U.S., through the notion of a citizens' agenda (Christians, 1999; Glasser, 1999; Mesquita, 2003; Rosen, 1994; Traquina, 2003; Vicente, 2010).

In the specific field of international news, the intended audiences have been defined as divided between domestic and foreign (Mody, 2010, p. 29), although this may be often a product of journalists' imagination – the combination of electronic media and "deterritorialised" audiences (Appadurai, 1996) – activated in order to "mediate to their audiences the element of unfamiliarity and difference in foreign news" (Hannerz, 2004, p. 4). In this sense, "the category of 'foreign news' makes it easier for editors to safely assume

that most stories from abroad will be as alien to the audiences as the countries involved" (Tai & Chang, 2002, p. 254).

Even if in a different context, Appadurai's concept of imagination was recently operationalized through research on the role Turkish soap operas played in the life of a social mix of women in Qatar. Findings suggest that women recurred to their backgrounds to avoid a sense of loss (Issa, 2011). We suggest that research about the work of international news reporters would be enriched by looking at this "situated imagination" (Athique, 2008), analyzing how news producers, in our case international reporters, construct the *public interest* by *imagining* their audiences.

On the other hand, perception of public disinterest has been one often used argument for reducing international news coverage (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009a; McLeary, 2006). During the 1990s, significantly in the immediate post-Cold War world, American producers and network executives believed the "mass audience's interest in daily events beyond their nation's borders [was] is declining, so little such news [was] is offered – which exacerbates the high cost/low return (or low visibility) nature of international coverage" (Utley, 1997, p. 2).

Hermida argues that "the problem with international reporting it isn't that we have a shortage in supply. The problem is on the demand side of Western mainstream media. The space and airtime essentially now allocated to foreign news are decreasing, since the perception is that the audiences are not interested on it" (Vicente, 2011).

This depicted "America's blindness to the rest of the world" – or rather it general interest in foreign affairs only when facing a threat of war or an attack to the perceived national interests – was one decade later addressed by veteran international reporters, claiming for escape from a Plato's cave (Rosenblum, 2007).

Researchers have been also pointing towards one absent audience concerning the abundance of documentaries produced about the Iraq war (2003), speaking on a public aversion that shall impel scholars to historicize the specificities of what has been described as a *sui generis* moment in the larger perspective of anemic contemporary "anti-war" sentiment (Carruthers, 2008). More recently, research has also confirmed not only the decrease of publics' interest but also media coverage for war coverage [Iraq and Afghanistan] in contemporary American journalism, showing that

> coverage of the Afghanistan war dropped to just 4% of all the news studied in 2010, (down from 5% in 2009) as the nine-year-old conflict often struggled for attention in the

> mainstream media. The big change in last year's narrative was the diminished attention to U.S. policy debates over the war. Coverage of the Iraq war, meanwhile, dropped to 1% of the newshole studied from 2% in 2009 (*The State of News Media 2011: An Annual Report on American Journalism*, 2011)

Regarding international news audiences, it has also been found in research concerning the U.S. context, that "society is awash in specialized information (including foreign news) available to those who have the time, interest, money, and education to take advantage of it" (Hess, 1996, pp. 4-5).

# CHAPTER 3 – THE GLOBAL ONLINE JOURNALIST: TOWARDS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL NETWORK OF CORRESPONDENCES

## 3.1. Globalization and the social shaping of technology

Journalism has always been rooted in technology (V. Campbell, 2004, p. 245). For this reason, this study on international news reporters must carefully look at how ongoing technological innovations are transforming not only news circulation but critically journalists' roles, professional norms and newsgathering routines.

In the past, it has been assumed that "media content may be affected by the adoption of technological advances" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 215), particularly noting that technological developments mean that "more pictures and more stories can be produced and distributed faster than ever" (Sreberny & Paterson, 2004, p. 9).

Although, the evaluation of the contemporary state of flux in journalism shall not be exclusively observed through the lenses of technological developments, but crucially through "the substantive or quality aspects of news culture, including journalism's changing roles and responsibilities towards its *public* – modern journalism's presumed raison d'être" (Preston, 2009, p. 1).

It has been noticed that "parallel to the professionalization process of journalism in the 20th century runs a history of ongoing computerization and digitization in all sectors of society" (Deuze, 2011, p. 23).

For this reason, we share the previous acknowledgement that "a comprehensive analysis of the social adoption process of technological innovation such as the Internet requires the understanding of technologies as a socially constructed multifaceted reality, and not a monolithic element that appears from nowhere and imposes its own logic to social actors", i.e. "there is a social context where they [technologies] are invented, which determines the 'intention' of the researchers in developing them and a social context (…) in which users negotiate the proposed definitions" (Domingo, 2008, pp. 19-20).

Therefore, deterministic assumptions that technological developments generate editorial effects shall be critically moderated with the consideration of different adoption processes explaining variations among news organizations, newsgathering routines and ultimately journalism roles and its norms. Transformations in news production shall be

understood as being multidimensional, mediated by political-institutional roles that frame journalists as an occupational group within particular organizational settings and professional cultures (Ursell, 2001).

This social shaping of technology – "how the design and implementation of technology are patterned by a range of social and economic factors as well as narrowly technical considerations" (R. Williams & Edge, 1996, p. 865) – is supported by international research on the digital divides that has long revealed that Internet, as well the preceding communication technologies, exist through uneven access and use (e.g. Calderaro, 2010; Norris, 2001; Sassi, 2005; Warschauer, 2002; Wilson, Best, & Kleine, 2005).

Insofar "no existing communication technology covers all human settlements on the globe" (Mody, 2010, p. 29), it is crucially relevant to recognize beforehand that the transformations at the level of the material basis of contemporary societies coexist with "the parallel unleashing of formidable productive forces of the informational revolution, and the consolidation of black holes of human misery in the global economy" (Castells, 2000, p. 2). Far from being an external transformative force, "technology *is* society, and society cannot be understood or represented without its technological tools" (p. 5).

The optimistic expectation of a McLuhanian global village has its own limits in the reality of world media systems (e.g. Rice & Haythornthwaite, 2006). Although, as a paradigm for the study of media and communication, globalization is still central (Sparks, 2007, p. 190).

Much of the research on international journalism has been developed under the umbrella of "global news" and, for a matter of coherence, "global events" for "global audiences" by "global newsrooms". In such a conceptualization of a global interconnectedness, "a world integrated by a network of communications having influence on people's daily life, media technologies seem to be the crucial instruments" (Stahlberg, 2006, p. 63). This interconnectedness must not be interpreted as a self-evident cultural globalization, but as an indication that "the institutional arrangements for transmitting and exchanging news materials spawned by the availability of new technology have transformed the global structure of news dissemination around the world toward a greater decentralization of news" (Rantanen, 2004, p. 303).

It has been equally argued that "the central feature of the idea of globalization is that many contemporary problems cannot be adequately studied at the level of nation-

states, that is, in terms of each country and its inter-national relations"(Sklair, 1999, p. 143). For these reasons, *international* and *global* are not simple interchangeable terms: while the first delegates a strong importance to the relations among independent nation-states, the second applies for the growing interconnectedness of social relations beyond the strict consideration of national boundaries.

Arguably journalists operate now in a more hybrid environment, through a local-global dimension. One direct implication of globalization for the conceptualization of international news reporters' work comes from the consideration that "foreign news is a special genre of news. It's not just from afar but also news of widespread significance" (Hachten & Scotton, 2007, p. 8). Therefore, "by presenting the perspectives of the 'Other' alongside one's 'own', as well as interpretations by third parties, international reporting has the potential, especially given the public's geocultural distance from the international event, to shift culture-specific values towards a global order of values" (Hafez, 2007, p. 24).

It has been proposed that, following the possibilities opened by the Internet, we are now facing a dual role of the global news system:

> Comprising "global" or transnational agencies and their junior national or regional partners – in simultaneously constructing "national" identities while facilitating the development of a transnational consciousness and contributing to an intensity of transnational activity that is said to constitute a process of "globalization" (Boyd-Barrett, 2000, p. 299)

Realizing this global complexity, where "there are diverse networked time-space paths, that there are often massive disproportionalities between causes and effects, and that unpredictable and yet irreversible patterns seem to characterize all social and physical systems" (Urry, 2003, p. 8), the concepts of *glocalization* and *translocalism* are based on the recognition that

> the local cannot be understood as a locus that is detached from the larger forces of history, politics, economics, or military conflict. Rather, the local needs to be understood as the space where global forces become recognizable in form and practice as they are enmeshed in local human subjectivity and social agency. This entanglement is always multifaceted, part accommodation and part resistance, sometimes overt and other times latent (Kraidy & Murphy, 2008, p. 339)

This deterritorialization, "the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism" (Robertson, 1997, p. 73), is framed in complex societies by what has been regarded as a new informational paradigm supported by electronically transmitted information: the network multidimensionality in the

digital age.

In this regard, a network is defined as

> a set of interconnected nodes. A node is the point at which a curve intersects itself. What a node is, concretely speaking, depends on the kind of concrete networks of which we speak (…) [for instance] They are television systems, entertainment studios, computer graphics milieux, news teams, and mobile devices generating, transmitting, and receiving signals in the global network of the new media at the roots of cultural expression and public opinion in the Information Age (Castells, 2000, p. 501)

Implied is the recognition that "processes of social transformation summarized under the ideal type of the network society go beyond the sphere of social and technical relationships of production: they deeply affect culture and power as well" (p. 507).

Although historically previous forms of social organization have existed, the contemporary networking logic, technologically supported by advances in microelectronics, is admittedly more favorable to the pervasiveness of "a social determination of a higher level than that of the specific social interests expressed through the networks: the power of flows takes precedence over the flows of power" (p. 500). By flows one shall interpret "purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in organizations and institutions of society" (Castells, 1999, p. 57).

Power, "the structural capacity of a social actor to impose its will over other social actor(s)", and counter-power, "the capacity of a social actor to resist and challenge power relations that are institutionalized" (Castells, 2007, p. 239) don't disappear in the network society. The mediascape, "the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information and the images of the world created by these media" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35), is conceivably the social space where power is decided.

Recent research observed the Wikileaks disclosure of video footage from two Apache attack helicopters firing and killing 12 people in Iraq (July 12, 2007), among who were Reuters' photojournalist Samir Noor-Eldeen and his assistant Saeed Chmagh. The episode illustrates how the Internet can enhance new forms of power and counter-power relationships (Sreedharan, Thorsen, & Allan, 2011; Thorsen, Sreedharan, & Allan, 2011; Thorsen, Sreedharan, Allan, & Andén-Papadopoulos, 2011).

> That power is hardly perfect or absolute. Most important, there is no evidence that the rules of engagement, in fact, changed as a result of the exposure of the video and the subsequent criticism, or that the pilots were disciplined in a manner that would have led

> others to alter their behavior. Indeed, the new power may turn out to be rather weak. But again, the story does identify new avenues to try to exercise power over a matter of public concern through the discovery and dissemination of information over forms and pathways that are different from, and susceptible to, different forms of control than those that would have been available in previous eras (Benkler, 2011, pp. 722-723)

In this regard, the author suggests that research concerning power in the network society can be implemented by observing

> the degree of (a) openness, the extent to which individuals can bob and weave between networks to achieve their desired behaviors, perceptions, or outcomes, and (b) completeness, the degree to which they can maneuver within a network to achieve those results; and (c) configuration, pathways for the flow of influence or its avoidance (Benkler, 2011, p. 721)

The multidimensional network it is "one that includes multiple types of relations both among the same types of nodes and between different types of nodes. Thus, a fully multidimensional network has multiple types of connections among all possible types of entities" (Castells & Monge, 2011, p. 789). It distinguishes from unidimensional networks, where "the same set of objects [for instance, international news reporters] can have multiple relations as reflected in the differences between formal (authority) and informal (social) communication relations that are typical in organizational networks" (p. 788).

Questions of scale and homogeneity translate in the ambivalent consideration that globalization "simultaneously facilitates certain 'monoculture' global standards along with the proliferation of a host of micro-communities that were not possible before (…) The very concept of 'media globalization' suggests that we are not quite sure if media lead to globalization or are themselves the result of it" (Reese, 2010, p. 345).

Research depicting the economics of media markets has explained how some media organizations – often conglomerates – through ownership and concentration have come to dominate the world news industry by controlling the mechanisms of economies of scale (Ginneken, 1998). In that sense, the internationalization of mass communication cannot be separated from economic globalization, since "the expanding international business media play a key role in 'servicing' the world economy by supplying rapid, reliable, economic and financial news" (Hachten & Scotton, 2007, p. 181).

In this thesis we are crucially observing the culture of international news reporters, in terms that professional/occupational identity reflects and transforms the more general societal role of journalism:

> In a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning. This is not a new trend, since identity (…) has been at the roots of meaning since the dawn of human society. Yet identity is becoming the main, and sometimes the only, source of meaning in an historical period characterized by widespread destructuring of organizations, delegitimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions. People increasingly organize their meaning not around what they do but on the basis of what they are, or believe they are (Castells, 2000, p. 3)

Underlying to this research are the local-global nexus (Alger, 1988) of the linkages between human settlements and worldwide phenomena as a central element in the globalization of journalistic culture and professionalism. This corresponds to frame international news reporters as "the agents who form the infrastructure of the global in specific local settings" (Reese, 2010, p. 348).

### 3.2. The global journalist: from international to "global" news

We have already observed how international news reporters work across contact zones. They can be regarded as halfies, i.e. "people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage" (Abu-Lughod, 2006, p. 466). It has been assumed that "by belonging simultaneously to both local and global realms, halfies are capable of understanding the hybridity inherent at their intersection" (Kraidy, 1999, p. 461).

This consideration has led researchers to discuss global ethical standards (Singer, 2011) and the adjusted principles for a multidimensional objectivity (Ward, 2011). These works depart from the central claim that "the globalization of news media requires a radical rethinking of the principles and standards of journalism ethics, through the adoption of a cosmopolitan attitude" (Ward, 2005, p. 3).

One basic assumption is that news producers, texts and discourses (artifacts), and news audiences are less likely to share the same nation-state frame of reference. It is inferred that "to the extent that certain transnational media emphasize this approach to news, we may call it 'global journalism.' And to the extent that certain journalists operate from this perspective we may describe them the same way" (Reese, 2010, p. 348).

From here research can extract two important elements: first, the relevance of considering how journalists do perspective their work; second, the more general theoretical

concern that their cultural and occupational perception of globalization is one mediation among others within a particular locality, i.e. a "kind of doxa" (J. Friedman, 2002, p. 23) aimed or not to a world-wide audience, a specific component of international news flows.

Regarding this production of locality (Appadurai, 1996), one can reasonably state that even considering the findings from political communication and digital divides research – or precisely, because of them – "the world after globalization is one in which culture is everywhere, and everywhere at issue" (Mazzarella, 2004, p. 347). In that sense, "one can more broadly imagine a 'global news arena' supported by an interlocking cross-national awareness of events, in a world further connected by networks of transnational elites, media professionals among them, who engage each other through mutually shared understandings" (Reese, 2010, p. 348).

But simultaneously research shall also question: is the creation of a new occupational category just a temptation for scholars? For that matter, "who qualifies as a 'global journalist' and is this just a new term for 'foreign correspondent'? This may ultimately be more of a provocative concept than a strictly defined empirical category" (p. 347). This inquiry is further more difficult due the dispersal and inter-connectedness of the subjects expressed in "the trend towards dispatching foreign correspondents to far-flung locales only when a story is considered big enough to top the global news agenda. This trend began in the 1970s as the jet aeroplane, combined with satellite technology, resulted in the birth of the 'parachute reporter'" (d'Entremont & Dougall, 1999, p. 87).

If as a point of departure we recognize that "news media content seems to be becoming more and more deterritorialized, involving complex relations and flows across national borders and continents" and that "the indications are that it has become harder to categorize news texts as either solely domestic or foreign new", then we second the observation of others on "the potential usefulness of the concept of global journalism, which transgresses and transcends the traditional domestic-foreign dichotomy", addressing a singular epistemology (global outlook) on space, power and identity (Berglez, 2008, p. 845).

Similarly, others have suggested the notion of a *networked journalism*, going beyond the nation-state as an epistemological point of departure and accordingly underlining the limitations of interpreting geocultural distant events as "foreign", enlightening the

> synthesis of traditional news journalism and the emerging forms of participatory media enabled by Web 2.0 technologies such as mobile phones, email, websites, blogs, micro-blogging, and social networks. Networked Journalism allows the public to be involved in every aspect of journalism production through crowd-sourcing, interactivity, hyper-linking, user-generated content and forums. It changes the creation of news from being linear and top-down to a collaborative process. Not all news production will be particularly networked. Not many citizens want to be journalists for much of their time. But the principles of networking are increasingly practiced in all forms of news media (Beckett, 2010, p. 1)

Following from this, "the job of journalists, regardless of their national reporting base, is to provide their particular citizen audiences with the global perspective needed to understand the political world of today" (Elliott, 2004, p. 31). In this media ecosystem in flux, contemporary journalists' role is to connect, "which involves four principal linkages: between contextual back stories and current events; between citizens and institutional processes of policy-making; between citizens and the confusing mass online as well as offline information sources; and between communities and communities" (Coleman, Anthony, & Morrison, 2009).

Despite the post-modern consideration of the eroding framework of nation-states in the network society, one shall not confuse that epistemological condition of a local-global nexus with the kind of severe problems resulting from the structural inability of states to be responsible for key functions in society. This latter statelessness "deters the prospects for the affirmation of journalism that anchors democratic life. State absence facilitates anti-press violence, undermines the economic basis for news organizations, and weakens the rule of law" (Waisbord, 2007, p. 115).

Undertheorized and under construction, the field of global journalism studies has been until now a useful shortcut for very different research approaches: from cross-national comparisons of newsgathering practices (Herbert, 2000), media systems (Dobek-Ostrowska, Glowacki, Jakubowicz, & Sukosd, 2010; Merrill, 1983) and news cycles (Cottle & Rai, 2008; Cushion & Lewis, 2010), to the interrelations between globalization and news flows (de Beer, 2010), culture and politics (Volkmer, 2002), journalism education (Deuze, 2008b; Wasserman, 2011) and ethics (Ibold, 2010; Ward, 2005, 2011).

Despite this fragmentation it also shall be noticed that the field is generally arriving the recognition that "understanding journalism in an 'era of globalization' means going beyond a general update of news systems and practices in various countries" (Reese, 2008, p. 241) and that the development of an actual global public space expects that "new

analytical concepts are thus required so as to help us better understand the consequences for news journalism in this transnational era" (Volkmer, 2005, p. 357).

It is now crucially important to admit that "a message posted from a home computer with no more than a dial-up connection can rocket up the global news agenda via social networking sites such as Twitter and global news agencies". At the same time, researchers shall exclude any deterministic assumption that "global journalism takes place in a context of often clashing cultures, values, and identities. This tension between cultural specificity and pluralism continues to challenge media ethicists" (Ibold, 2010, p. 208).

From this recognition and having in mind the empirical urgency in this field of studies, we reasonably suggest to frame global journalism and the associated media regimes – its "principles, norms, rules, and decision making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue area" (Krasner, 1982, p. 185) – as a form of knowledge, an ethical standpoint based on cosmopolitanism and inter-cultural communication, practiced by a very heterogeneous and fluid confederacy of actors in multidimensional networks, questioning national, cultural and disciplinary boundaries (D. Weaver & Loffelholz, 2008).

### 3.3. Reporting global issues through local and home frames: contra-flows and micro-spheres

Historically looking at when something becomes world or global news, we are entering a history of ruptures, continuities and amnesia, since often "the news presents itself to us as a natural succession of unrelated events" (Ginneken, 1998, p. 110). Global crisis reporting (Cottle, 2009a) is a vivid example of "how we collectively recognize and respond to these different threats to humanity depends in large measure on how they become defined and deliberated, constructed and contested in the contemporary news media" (p. 1).

Recalling the history of international news reporting from the perspective of Western news media, researchers and practicing journalists have long shown how the so-called global news are often composed by coups and earthquakes (Rosenblum, 1979), metaphorically approaching journalistic agendas and the respective logistical deployment to a seismograph responding to events instead of long-term processes (Perreault, 2010). On the other hand, as we have seen when regarding the relations between international

reporters and their sources, there is also a great amount of news planning to consider – calendar journalism and commemorations, in the designation of Ginneken (1998).

Although this study is not based in a frame analysis (Goffman, 1986), it is important to generally observe how news production must also be considered in order to further understand how frames become salient in news texts. It is especially relevant to bear in mind the already referred debates and empirical findings on the cross-cultural constraints impending in international news reporters' work. On the other hand, research shall assume that "identity is always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation. It is always within representation. Identity is not something which is formed outside and then we tell stories about it. It is that which is narrated in one's own self" (Hall, 1997, p. 49).

In this respect, two major findings can be summarized. The first is considerably close to the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) debates. We shall describe it as *reporting global issues through home frames*, with, for instance, journalists scanning the local press for story ideas and checking the international media for home country angles (A. Knight, 2007). It has been underlined that "often, the only thing universal or global about the world-view of different media systems is that they all suffer from the same problem: the domestication of the world" (Hafez, 2007, p. 25; Tyndall, 2011).

On the other hand, we can find a second trend; let's name it *reporting global issues through local frames*. Research studying Rwanda genocide has found that considerable background reporting could be found in local African press work, but didn't appear in the Western news media (Alozie, 2007).

It has been argued that "most foreign newspapers entrust coverage of Africa to stringers and wire services except in times of major crises" (Mody, 2010, p. 18). In that extent, "the events that make local journalists actors in a global flow of news are, however, truly exceptional. Local journalists are instead part of a pool that may be mobilized when something happens that could interest international news organizations" (Stahlberg, 2006, p. 64). This is because "most of the time, international reporting in media systems across the world is produced for a domestic audience, not for the regions in question themselves" (Hafez, 2007, p. 39).

This ambivalent tension of reporting global issues with a home and/or local angle has led recently to the creation of dedicated courses to help journalists "find the local angle in the broadest of international stories", as exemplified by Poynter News University course

"Reporting Global Issues Locally" (Poynter.org).

Considering the conceptual foundations of network journalism, one must ask if is it still possible to assume that "the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within it operates" and that taking the nation-state as the reference point "it reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted"(Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956, pp. 1-2).

Researchers claim that as important as differences at a national scale, it's "the emergence of a transnational global professionalism, the shape of which will greatly affect how well the world's press meets the normative standards" (Reese, 2001, p. 173).

Until the 1960s, U.S. print and electronic foreign correspondents were mainly based in Europe and those covering Latin America, Africa and the Middle East were given relatively short space and time to report news (Utley, 1997, p. 4). During the 1970s a central debate emerged in the core of international communication around a NWICO (MacBride, et al., 1980). The Cold War geopolitical context and, specifically, the anti-colonial struggle and the non-aligned movement framed the discussion in terms of cultural and social imperialism, i.e. dominance.

UNESCO was at the heart of the discussion and "the developing concerns included an examination of international media traffic, of the operation of the major news agencies and of the way in which satellite broadcasting and other kinds of information flows could impinge upon national sovereignty" (Sreberny-Mohammadi, et al., 1985, p. 9).

This news coverage study produced by the International Association for Media and Communication Research for UNESCO, "planned as international inventory of foreign news reporting" (p. 10), regarded both press and broadcasting based on national reports from 29 nations[18], examining the events that dominated international news reporting and how international news imagery is created by means of a news content analysis and statistics[19].

A number of findings, "standard journalistic devices", are distinguished, namely: the "frequently visible effort to maintain impartiality and balance in reporting a particular international item", the fact that "complex international processes were reduced to the

[18] The first part of the final report only includes an outline of 13 countries: North America (The United States), Africa (Nigeria), Middle East (Iran, Lebanon), Asia (Australia, India, Malaysia), Eastern Europe (Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia), Western Europe (Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, The Netherlands).
[19] A more recent example of this research branch may be found in Bella Mody's (2010) study on the geopolitics of representation of Darfur.

psychological profiling of central political actors" (p. 29) in relation to "the great similarity of reporting in al systems" covered (p. 38). Despite the wide range of media systems, political and developmental standpoints, authors found an "almost universal (…) selection of the same foci in international news reporting" (p. 52), both in terms of topics and actors, accompanied by a prime importance given to regionalism, i.e. the geographical region in which the region was situated.

A complementary finding relates to the "consistent news-makers", expressively the United States and Western Europe, and "the areas of invisibility". It was vividly the case of Latin America, with for instance Guatemala civilian mass killings (200.000) in the late 1970s and late 1980s as a historical example of unreported violence (Tunstall, 2008, pp. 64-69).

> Perhaps more important than the questions of whether the West is over-represented in international news is the problem of the several under-representation of certain other parts of the world (…) so that it is still true to say that 'the peripheral nations do not write or read much about each other, especially across bloc borders' (…) regions of the developing world make news when undergoing some kind of disturbance that makes them, for a time, at least, a 'hot spot' of tension and crisis. News in most media systems seems to be defined as the exceptional event, making coups and catastrophes newsworthy wherever they occur. It is not so much that the developing world is singled out for such 'negative' attention, but that the developing countries tend to be reported only in this manner (Sreberny-Mohammadi, et al., 1985, p. 52)

Based on the influential works from Rogers (1962, 1976a, 1976b), Schramm (1964a, 1964b), Rao (1966), Schramm and Lerner (1967), the study developed a strong eye on the role of mass and interpersonal communication and information in national development. In simple terms, the main argument was that effective communication can serve as a multiplier for economic growth.

From these discussions a new subset of practices and studies emerged around the notion of Development Communication and Development Journalism (e.g. Lent, 1972; Ogan, 1980; Ogan, et al., 2009). The heritage from this highly polarized discussion still has an enduring impact on globalization studies.

Although quite different in the specific factor they focus on, these studies on international news and communication share the more general assumption of systemic determinant characteristics (Wu, 1998, 2003) as being stable and, on that regard, predictable.

The rich literature regarding newsworthiness of international news concludes that

geographic proximity (Wu, 2003), position in hierarchy of nations (Galtung, 1971; Golan, 2010), gross national product, trade and political relations with the United States[20] are crucial for coverage (Ahern, 1984; Wu, 1998) as well as deviance[21], relevance to U.S. (Shoemaker, et al., 1987), and cultural affinity – a shared language, the amount of migration between nations and of intermarriage between nationals, the amount of travel and statuses and past-statuses, for instance mother country-colony, patron-protégé (Hester, 1973).

At the core of these debates were mainly the four Western news agencies and particularly foreign correspondents, which presence in the field was also regarded as a primary predictor of the amount of news coverage (Wu, 1998). Arguments were produced not only regarding the implications for news dissemination but also on the subject of representation (e.g. Doriawala, 1986).

In the sense they represent the institutionalization of a news net (Chu, 1985), press concentration appeared as a key debate topic and even give floor for the creation, in 1975, of the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool (NANAP), as an effort balance the prevalent coverage of Third World countries through an ethnocentric Western frame of crisis and conflict (Kirat & Weaver, 1985).

Despite this *contra-flow* or *contra view* effort in news exchange (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992; Sonwalkar, 2004), research has demonstrated that the NANAP stories were "based mainly on the activities of elites (politicians, presidents, diplomats) as were the AP [Associated Press] and UPI [United Press International]" and that "the lack of interpretative background, investigative reporting, and contextual material" was also a persistent finding (pp. 45-46).

More recently, significantly in a post-Cold War era, it has been recognized that the prediction framework applied to international news needs to shift towards a new approach of research and policy making in order to address the contemporary problems already identified in the heart of UNESCO in the 1970s and 1980s:

> Now, it appears to be economic interests, rather than ideological antagonism, that play the central role in determining news about other nations. These economic interests are of two types. First, there is the level of daily economic interaction between nations. The countries you import goods from and the countries you export to are particularly important to governments, corporations, business people, and even average citizens. (…) The second facet of the economic determinism of international news is related to the cost-

[20] Wu (1998) indicates that the U.S. was at the time the most covered country in the world
[21] The deviance dimension is composed by Novelty, Conflict, Sensationalism and Prominence (Shoemaker, Chang, & Brendlinger, 1987, pp. 351-353)

> effectiveness of international news production (Wu, 1998, pp. 73-74)

From the previous discussions on a NWICO, it may not be even surprising to historically recognize how Fidel Castro "invented" a global CNN and what that meant for global journalism as the end of "foreign" news:

> In the earliest days of CNN, when CNN was meant to be seen only in the United States, the enterprising Fidel Castro was pirating and watching CNN in Cuba. Fidel was intrigued by CNN. He wanted to meet the person responsible (…) It was a big deal for Ted [Turner] and during the discussions Castro suggested that CNN be made available to the entire world. In fact it was that seed, that idea that grew into CNN International, which is now seen in every country and territory on the planet (E. Jordan, 1999, p. 5)

In terms of news production, the Gulf War (1991) conferred the foreground to satellite telephones and the so-called CNN-effect, positioning global networks as decisive actors in determining policies and outcomes of international events (Bredeson, 2011), even if research suggests there is no sufficient evidence on that prescriptive power in political communication (Gilboa, 2005).

With developments in communication satellites the volume and transmission speed of international news was dramatically accelerated (Volkmer, 1999), having a direct impact in the field work of reporters. "That lone foreign correspondent out there is no longer cut off from an editor, who now may be on the phone several times a day with advice and instructions, often when the reporter is on deadline" (Hachten, 2005, p. 128).

From an economic perspective, "new technologies in cable and satellite TV have turned the stable, predictable, almost automatically profitable television marketplace into a competitive cauldron in which journalism must increasingly compete with entertainment programming" (Utley, 1997, p. 2). The almost immediate transmission from the scene also revived concerns about accuracy and diversity in coverage (Bennett & Paletz, 1994; Kellner, 1992). On the other hand, even if "CNN is by now well-established as a major global news player, although its reach is predominantly to national English-speaking elites and the global business and educational traveler installed in plush international hotel rooms" (Sreberny & Paterson, 2004, p. 14).

Renewed critiques to U.S. coverage since the Gulf War (1991) led to the creation of new international channels in the Arab region, being Al-Jazeera the most prominent and rising the equivalent admitted "Al Jazeera effect" (Seib, 2008). Even if Al Jazeera is perhaps the most internationally recognized face of satellite television being produced in the Arab region, other stations shall be of course considered by international research (e.g. Al

Arabiya, Al Alam, Al Ekhbariya, Al Hurra). Recently, research compared Al Jazeera English and Arabic online coverage of the US-Al Qaeda conflict and found significant differences only concerning placement of news stories; the majority of attributed news sources were from U.S. and its allies (Fahmy & Al Emad, 2011).

These contemporary transformative trends in global communication – the end of Cold War, satellite communication, media convergence, the emergence of new major global communication stakeholders (McPhail, 2010, p. 351) – frame the more recent emergence of non-English international news channels, such as the Japanese Global News, the Spanish ECO News, Chinese CCTV, Brazil's Globo News. Regional news organizations such as Eurovision News Exchange, Asiavision and Arabvision also play an important role defining the international flows of news. All these news networks may now be regarded as *micro-spheres* in international journalism by establishing "a new dimension in the global news flow, which not only refines domestic and foreign news in national journalism during times of crisis but also the news angle of transnational channels" (Volkmer, 2002, p. 241). In summary, foreign news as a marketable power display (Wang, Lee, & Wang, 2013).

Research depicting Africa and South Asia has assessed the increasing local provision and growth of competition jeopardizing the consumption of news from traditional international providers, also translated in a growing shift from official languages (e.g. Standard Arabic, Swahili, English) towards vernacular languages and dialects (Geniets, 2010). On the other hand, research has also revealed the difficulties of emergent international broadcasters to compete and prosper in the networked mediascape (Bakshi, 2011).

The debates within the NWICO represented a clear point on the importance given by the research community to the unevenness in news representation and international information flows. Today, it is still admitted that "Africa continues to be covered least, typically through perhaps well-intentioned human interest stories that attempt to establish relevance to readers of any state" (Mody, 2010, p. 14). A whole and diverse continent is often portrayed as a "huge zone of incomprehensibility in which a picture emerges in the Western press of impenetrable confusion and often brutality" (Chakars, 2009, p. 768).

As one researcher has put it:

> Foreign correspondence from this continent probably has the highest animal/human ratio in the world – meet the chimpanzees, gorillas, lions, elephants, rhinos, hippos, giraffes, crocodiles. A remarkable number of Africa correspondents, too, sooner or later make it to Timbouctou. One may wonder why, but perhaps it is because there are two or three

> Timbouctous: the real but perhaps least significant one, in Mali, and one or two in the more or less popular Northern imagination (Hannerz, 2007, p. 306)

Consequently, one must be aware that "media – along with education and science – not only note and remember: they choose to forget and blot out even more. They contribute to the production and reproduction of our sense of historical continuity or eruption" (Ginneken, 1998, p. 111), or the absence of it.

Illustrating the complexity of the African mediascape, it has been suggested that "African journalism lacks both the power of self-definition and the power to shape the universals that are deaf-and-dumb to the particularities of journalism in and on Africa" (Nyamnjoh, 2005, p. 3). Contrarily, other scholars propose that an African journalism model shall be grounded both in the recognition that if some percepts of Western liberal model are deeply present, there's also evidence of unique characteristics such as oral discourse and the use of local languages (Shaw, 2009).

This recognition states the relevance of the historical geocultural location inside international news reporting. In this regard, Global North and Global South are now two main general framing concepts, even if considerably not descriptively rigorous, often serving as a new shortcut for Third World (e.g. Braveboy-Wagner, 2009, 2003; Milkias, 2010; Soderbaum & Stalgren, 2010).

Therefore, one obvious research path for global communication studies in the network society shall be to test the hypothesis that a news organization's location in time and space is reflected in its standpoint.

Shortcomings of Western news reporting on Africa have been previously resumed by Hachten and Scotton (2007). Authors refer parachute journalism, the declining of coverage, barriers to reporting, from languages to spatial distances, communications reliability, inconvenient or haphazard air travel to constraints imposed by governments and official authorities; and from the latter, also self-censorship.

Individual biases and journalists' sources have also been reported as significantly influencing the coverage (Kothari, 2011). Physical and psychological dangers must also be considered. Since 1992, 861 journalists have been reported killed by the Committee to Protect Journalists: illustratively, 39% were covering politics, 34% war, 21% corruption and 14% human rights. Among the 20 most dangerous countries for reporters are Algeria, Somalia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Angola (CPJ, 2011).

While recognizing that too often Africa's media image (Hawk, 1992) is translated as a homogeneous entity of wild and jungle, famine and starvation, endemic violence and conflict, coup d'états, political instability and HIV/AIDS, one shall also consider all those factors when observing that further contextualization – the how and why as the dark continent of Journalism (Carey, 1986) – is needed in news reporting and when perceiving explanatory journalism (Parisi, 1999) as reason-giving (Ettema, 2007), i.e. journalism as a reasoning institution pursuing and rendering reasons for public choice in deliberative democracy.

## 3.4. Digitization and the evolving nature of newswork

### 3.4.1. Media ecosystem, mediadiversity and mediamorphosis

Studying the flow of NBC's Tet execution film (Vietnam War), and comparing it with the transmission of Eddie Adam's photograph for The Associated Press, researchers revealed that "one reason the NBC film of Loan was not circulated as widely as the Adams photograph was, of course, the differential natures of the print and cinematographic media. The motion film could not be presented in books or magazines" (Bailey & Lichty, 1972, p. 228). Previous limitations like these are currently being challenged by the digitization of journalism material basis.

Immediacy and audience reach have gained new meanings with satellite transmissions and is now commonly accepted among researchers that international news had another revealing moment during the coverage of the attacks of September 11, 2001(e.g. Sreberny & Paterson, 2004).

War coverage in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) has been described under the epitome of the two first "Internet wars" (Allan, 2004a). From a technological point of view, the coverage was – and still is – characterized by the prevalent use of satellite video telephones and by the improved capacities in digital edition and broadcast.

A distinct *media ecosystem*, "the sum of elements and relations among media or between media and their environment within certain time and space" (Zheng & Wang, 2008), is emerging. Or following a biological metaphor: a redefined network of complex systems of self-organized individuals and communities communicating with each other, among whose some produce and disseminate information and news, rather cooperating

and/or competing for the same scarce resource is apparent. In nature, ecosystems create biophysical feedback between living and nonliving components. For that matter, the media ecosystem – and more specifically the news ecosystem – is not static, but one that dynamically evolves through biodiversity or as one shall regard it: *mediadiversity*.

From the perspective of social life as lived *in* rather than *with* media, through transformative or evolutionary media dynamics, it is possible to speak in the survival of the mediated and assess a tendency to media immersion as an adaptive advantage in contemporary postgeographical and complex societies (Deuze, 2010). This of course doesn't obscures but further stresses the social inclusion dilemmas expressed by research on the digital divides, in the sense that "people do not spend more time with media because (or since) internet, but the technology of internet connects the time we spend with all media" (p. 2).

An adapted version of the theoretical foundations of evolutionary theory can be useful when studying the relations between technology and society if maintaining the fundamental insight on "the differences in detail between genetic and cultural evolution" (Mesoudi, 2010, p. 4). This excludes any abusive interpretation towards social determinism and eugeny.

Mediatization is a very complex social process "supposed to vary across institutional spheres, social settings, and historical periods". Then, the evolutionary framework "has the advantage of expecting differences across historical and social settings, technological and economic configurations, institutional structures, and political systems" (Rothenbuhler, 2009, p. 280). It corresponds to the assumption that the use of media for expression, information, influence and entertainment may change over time and space. For instance, transformations regarding medialects, the linguistic variants that arise out of specific media (Hjarvard, 2004). This is the fundamental reason why we deploy in this study the perspective of long-term trajectories in international journalism combined with short-term developments based on transformations on microelectronics and digitization.

One central concept in this discussion is that of an *mediamorphosis* and its principles: coevolution and coexistence, metamorphosis, propagation, survival, opportunity, need, and delayed adoption (Fidler, 1997, p. 29). Rather than speaking on a Gutenberg moment (Brown, 2010), a more suitable epistemological approach it is one that looks to archeologically position immediate findings into a history of trajectories.

Contemporary journalism culture and newswork (Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009) are being clearly compressed between tradition and change in the *networked mediaecosystem*. Domains like historical context and market environment, the process of innovation, journalistic practices, challenges to established professional dynamics, and the role of user-generated content have been revealing that journalism practice and studies must reconceptualize relations between news production and reception, if desiring to make sense of new phenomena in the heart of an online evolving information architecture (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009).

Internet and its graphical surface, the World Wide Web, came to be critical elements at the core of changes in news production and distribution. Four essential levels have been identified for the study of new technologies influence in journalism: journalists' work, news content, structure and/or organization of the newsroom, and the relationship between media, journalists and their audiences/publics (Pavlik, 2001a). This thesis is focused in international news reporters' newswork and relation with their sources and audiences/publics, admitting as a premise that "more and more journalists spend increasingly less of their time out in the field observing directly the events and processes on which they report" (p. 229).

In the epicenter of this tension between destructuration and restructuration (Demers, 2007) lays the journalist function as news producer, now confronted with what has been termed as a contextualized journalism, incorporating "not only the multimedia capabilities of digital platforms but also the interactive, hypermedia, fluid qualities of online communications and the customizable features of addressable media" (Pavlik, 2001b, p. 217).

Digitization accommodates now multiple media forms – text, photos, audio, video, animation – and consequently requires not just new technical skills, but crucially a distinct journalistic mind set towards non-fiction storytelling, challenging previous professional culture assumptions: "The journalist of the twenty-first century will need to become a much more skillful storyteller, one who can not only weave together the facts of an event or process but connect those facts to a much wider set of contextualizing events and circumstance" (p. 218), accrediting news content.

In networked journalism "all communicators and all communication are connected. The media space and control over what it contains are shared" (Singer, 2010a, p. 277). For this reason, "the ideal newsworker should be flexible and rigid at the same time, or so it

seems" (Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009, p. 557): flexible in adapting to a multi-skill occupational role and professional identity, rigid in the defense of the public service ideal and ethical standards.

Evaluating the implications of technological change for journalists' tasks and skills, research has already observed how the Internet is changing and creating different needs for news skills concerning story ideation, research, sourcing, processing, packaging and repurposing (Phillips, Singer, Vlad, & Becker, 2009). Simultaneously, these have been translating in a-typical working conditions (Hummel, Kirchhoff, & Prandner, 2012) expressed by a "growing amount of freelancers, the shortening of labor contracts, the downward pressure on financial remuneration, the working hours that are difficult to combine with a regular family life and the limited chances for upward function mobility" (Balcytiene, Raymaeckers, & Vartanova, 2011, p. 224). For these reasons, in the last decade of redefinitions in the mediascape, online journalism can adjustably be framed through the lenses of socio-professional and technological reinvention between mediamorphosis and mediacide (Alves, 2001).

This recognition should not lead to the deterministic conclusion that somewhere in time and space "new" media will absolutely displace and substitute "old" media. We share with other researchers the consideration that old and new media don´t simple displace each other (Wilson, et al., 2005), rather their co-existence is now more "networked and interpenetrating, creating new structures of communication through which journalism happens. This, rather than the addition of any particular new medium standing alone, is the significant globalizing aspect for journalism" (Reese, 2010, p. 350).

In this thesis, *multimedia journalism* is defined as "the presentation of a news story package on a website using two or more media formats, such as (but not limited to) spoken and written word, music, moving and still images, graphic animations, including interactive and hypertextual elements" (Deuze, 2004, p. 140).

Complementarily, *cross-platform journalism* is taken as "the integrated presentation of a news story package through different media, such as (but not limited to) a website, a Usenet newsgroup, e-mail, SMS, MMS, radio, television, teletext, print newspapers and magazines (a.k.a. horizontal integration of media)" (p. 140).

Both news production practices, too often taken as a synonym, are part of the larger process of *media convergence*, "the blending or merging of formerly distinct media technologies, mainly based on digitization processes, though the issues extend beyond

those raised by the technology itself" (Quandt & Singer, 2009, p. 130). Convergence respects not only to transformations in routines and newsroom structures, but also to the roles of journalists and audience. It operates through a vertical (multi-skilling) and horizontal (cross-platform) axis (Erdal, 2011), transforming the formerly stabilized meanings for journalists' relationships with their sources and their publics/audiences (Pavlik, 2008).

Multimedia and cross-platform content production have been regularly proposed as relevant variables building a development index of online journalism (e.g. Bachmann & Harlow, 2011; Gascón, 2010; Kopecka-Piech, 2011; Said-Hung & Arcila-Calderón, 2011; Thurman & Lupton, 2008).

Survey studies in Europe show that the technological opportunity represented by the Internet to reinforce journalism societal function remains unfulfilled: if practitioners celebrate it speed, breadth and diffusion, on the other hand they don't perceive the medium either as a mean for enhancing politics (e.g. defense of democracy, check on politicians) or as a business-oriented medium more useful for advertisers (Fortunati, et al., 2009).

Convergence in newswork (praxis) also has come to mean information redundancy, repurposing of content or "shovelware" (Erdal, 2009; Grueskin, Seave, & Graves, 2011b; Phillips, et al., 2009), mimicry of competition and other media (Boczkowski, 2009) – a.k.a *copy-paste journalism* – often produced by *seated journalists* (Pereira, 2003, 2004). For these professionals even if "the telephone remains the most important research tool", on the other hand "search engines, in particular Google, dominate the source-determination process and thereby have a decisive influence on the entire course of journalists' research". This last finding clearly illustrates the growing concern with self-referentiality in online journalism, strongly or mostly based on the permanent use of computer-aided research "a cross-check on research hardly occurs and that, essentially, the validation of sources does not take place at all" (Machill & Beiler, 2009, p. 201).

On the other hand, even if there is evidence of degradation of the "mobile journalist" and "solo journalist" genre, if used judiciously by experienced journalists multifaceted journalistic storytelling can be enriched (Martyn, 2009). Research on emerging multimedia packages, "in which static media are combined with related dynamic media to tell a story in an interactive way" (Zerba, 2004), suggests that despite scarce use of hipertextual structures, first-person accounts by non-journalists accompanied by

professional reporters present an interesting model for professional-citizen collaboration (Jacobson, 2010). Particularly, research suggest that journalists regard the emerging form of audio slideshow as a compelling storytelling convention, showing a "general consensus that the narrative power of audio slideshows is in having the 'subject tell their own story'" (Lillie, 2011, p. 357). This finding presents some support to the assumption that if "ten years ago, the biggest application on the Internet was email. Today it is video, an application that is set to become the primary media platform of the future" (Sagan & Leighton, 2010, p. 121).

Studies suggest that the potential of web-only feature stories it is located in the capacity of developing stories in depth, enriching the genre of special report, by recurring to multimedia and interactive dimensions (Ureta, 2011). From this, the need to reinforce reporting practices in online journalism is inferred, evidencing that contemporary practitioners are between the active learning/re-learning of distinct skills and their strict defense of traditional work routines and messages (Balcytiene, et al., 2011).

*Convergent journalism* (multimedia and cross-platform) has an impact not only on news as a practice, but crucially on the self-perception of journalists, their professional identity and more broadly in the interpretation of what is journalism societal role. This role is based in a cultural as well as a technical competence dimension, "as the professional identity of multimedia journalists can be considered to be the ongoing negotiation and evaluation of recombinant factors of influence on the daily decision-making and technology adoption processes of reporters and editors" (Deuze, 2004, p. 148).

The adoption of multimedia news production has led to the formation of multi-skilled teams – e.g. web designers, programmers, infographic designers, documentalists, reporters – suggesting that online journalism also corresponds to new professional profiles in newswork. For that reason, the human and technological available resources have a direct influence on the depth and extension of multimedia projects (Ureta, 2011)

Education programs in universities, schools and training institutes have signaled this state of fluidity in what competences is concerned and the need to adapt (Quadros, Caetano, & Larangeira, 2011). It has been suggested that the ideal type of online journalist shall understand the structures of digital media, be able to produce breaking news and use the Internet as information source, working not only as a transmitter but also orienting users, adapting the messages to the expressive characteristics of the Web, working in team and being open to a constant renewal of knowledge (Calvo, 2006).

Since newsgathering routines are used to make the work manageable, their relation with the publics/audiences, the social and political position of journalists and managers may elaborate differences regarding the news product. Previous research analyzing news production has frequently distinguished journalists' work from the technician area of supervision, such as printers or television cameramen (Tunstall, 1971). We need now to challenge this assumption, regarding journalism as an *adaptive profession* in which "professional ideals are being used as symbolic capital in the struggle to maintain professional boundaries". For this reason it is crucial to state that "the professional identities of journalists are not constructed in a vacuum. They are part of an ongoing project of *negotiation*, where the ideals play an important part" (Wiik, 2010, p. 196).

The contemporary condition of technological and economic fluidity in journalism restates the importance of innovative practices, making news organizations an active participant in constructing online journalism (Lewis, 2010).

For instance, research on artificial intelligence and digital identities applied in newswork suggest it is now possible to launch "test runs", simulating and testing the effect news stories have on audiences and stakeholders, which accordingly opens new discussions on ethical principles (Latar & Nordfors, 2011).

In the agenda of perspectives about the future of journalism, the figure of the *active practitioner* it is a central gateway to enter more deep in the newswork meanings of "a journalism that will be defined by new kinds of content and new kinds of storytelling as much as by new technologies and channels of communication" (McCombs, 2010). In a liquid state mediascape, online journalists are still developing answers to the evolving relationships with sources, users, contents and the medium as a journalistic tool (Candelas, 2011). Defining renewed quality standards it is not yet a finished goal for practitioners and researchers, furthermore considering that the passage from a static and mostly unidirectional World Wide Web towards a Web 2.0 (García, Curiel, & Rey, 2011; O'Reilly, 2005), essentially characterized by users commenting and producing content online, is overwhelmingly recent.

This latest techno-social reality it is close to what Tim Berners-Lee projected as a read/write web, a global hypertextual system of network-accessible information populated by interlinked pages of text, images, animations, sounds, videos and three-dimensional elements, estimated for the combination of knowledge that people could consult (read) and create (write) (Berners-Lee, 1996). In its second phase of evolution, "Web 2.0 harnesses the

Web in a more interactive and collaborative manner, emphasizing peers' social interaction and collective intelligence, and presents new opportunities for leveraging the Web and engaging its users more effectively" (Murugesan, 2007, p. 34).

Its founding mantra is that "the value of software is proportional to the scale and dynamism of the data that helps to manage" (O'Reilly, 2005). As a result a production dynamic is built upon users that create added-value, test new services in real time, based on a collective intelligence (e.g. Wikipedia) dispensing some intellectual property rights traditionally shielded (e.g. Creative Commons). This *architecture of participation* is reinforced by a model of personalization (e.g. RSS) and constancy (e.g. permanent link) in which data is processed and remixed.

The adaptation of Web 2.0 and its renewed production possibilities to newswork has paved the floor for the still emergent and evolving forms of *mash-up journalism*, the combination of resources from the social web with a journalistic purpose, converging several sources and third party contents in one new complete service or application. These creations represent an open questioning to traditional news production principles and practices, while encouraging collaborative and co-operative work (Tejedor, 2007).

This new technical hybridity suggests a new *social hybridity* captured by a renewed discussion on what it means to be a professional journalist and condensed in the Pro-Am concept: "Innovative, committed and networked amateurs working to professional standards" (Leadbeater & Miller, 2004, p. 9). For Pro-Ams, leisure it is not a passive consumption, they "build up forms of 'cultural capital' that they can deploy in their hobbies. This 'cultural capital' is made up of skills and knowledge, of the norms and practices, of disciplines and subcultures, which then allows them to become part of that group or pastime". In regard to professionalism, often they "do not see themselves that way. They do not earn more than 50 per cent of their income from their Pro-Am activities. They might be aspiring proto-professionals, semiprofessionals or former-professionals, but they would not be regarded as full professionals" (p. 22). They can be adjustably considered within a diverse range of practices between the uncompromising devotion of the amateur to the high expertise of the post-professional.

Far from being an intellectual creation of the 2000s, the Pro-Am retrieves the idea of a prosumer, advanced thirty years ago (Toffler, 1980). It suggests that was up to the Industrial Revolution to establish a tight distinction between professionals and amateurs – subsistence farmers consume directly what they produce; to some extent, the so-called

citizen journalism (Martinrey & Marín, 2011) proposes this same model of *information autarchy*: "Despite its ambiguities, the term 'citizen journalism' appeared to capture something of the countervailing ethos of the ordinary person's capacity to bear witness, thereby providing commentators with a useful label to characterize an ostensibly new genre of reporting" (Allan, 2009, p. 18). From this plurality of meanings depicting an ability to bear witness and distinctively publish it throughout digital networks, a range of designations appeared. Among the most usual ones one can find "grassroots journalism", "open source journalism", "wiki journalism", "participatory/collaborative journalism", "public journalism 2.0" or "user-generated content".

Considering Toffler proposal to divide economy in two sectors – one covering the entire unpaid work done directly by the people for themselves, their families and their communities, the other wrapping the production of goods and services for sale over a network of exchange (p. 266) – it becomes clearer how the rising trends in news publishing are reworking the previous stabilized meanings of what news production means.

This view has translated in the suggestion to position user-generated content as an informal economic activity, escaping conventional forms of measurement, governance and taxation, and for that matter "not in opposition to professional or 'producer media', or in hybridized forms of subjective combination with it (the so-called 'prosumer' or 'pro-am' system), but in relation to different criteria, namely the formal and informal elements in media industries" (Lobato, Thomas, & Hunter, 2011). Although, a focus based on the ethical standards of information verification illustrates how this discussion cannot be exclusively closed in economic considerations.

The changing mediascape demands from practitioners and scholars to move forward the usual deterministic and radical opposite analysis of, from one side, the final liberation of readers from news monopolies and, on the other extreme, the apocalyptic vision of the end of journalism and the risks that would represent for democratic societies (Neveu, 2010; OECD, 2010).

A synthesis position is needed. One that recognizes that as previously the new opportunities regarding a more diverse sourcing of information and the rise of entrepreneurial media organizations may also come with the challenge of distinct time pressures and lower-quality coverage, a greater homogeneity and superficiality of news angles, excessive commenting and opinion-led reports, market-driven journalism, and that

the increasing fragmentation of audiences led to the exclusion of great segments of citizens from the access to high-quality, depth and contextualized journalism.

Not just one or monolithic civic engagement through the media model is observable (Allan & Thorsen, 2009; C. W. Anderson, 2011; Harcup, 2011; Romano, 2010). This demands from journalists a renewed intelligence on social issues, identifying and accrediting the widening of information sources in the scope of a dispersed editorial ability.

The previous nature of journalistic authority as an institution is under tension to the exact extent to which the very disparate networked community of "citizen journalists" see itself as a moral entity (Christians, 1999). It reminds professional journalists that make things public is an important ethical category (Rosen, 1994). At the same time it brings to the light what epistemologically has been called different compromises with truth (G. Hudson & Temple, 2010) and, for that matter, a clear cognitive dissonance on what news is and shall be, expressed through the vision of an expert journalism (Boriss, 2007) or the heterogeneity of competence based on specialization and expertise. On this regard, "collaboration is not only in publishing news, then, but even in constructing the data sources that become the raw material that journalists from any news organization can work with" (Schudson, 2010).

### 3.4.2. Gatewatchers and user-generated content in newswork

After a first decade of experimental electronic publications (1982-1992) and a second phase (1993-2001) in which news media began to consolidate their presence in the Web, online journalism is currently undergoing a third wave of development characterized by new types of relations and partnerships with end users and a bridge between mass and customized/personalized information (Pryor, 2002). This collaborative online mediascape has already been termed as a Web 3.0 (Williamsom, 2011).

In this third generation of online journalism, mobile and locative media (Lemos, 2007) bring new dimensions to the access and publication of information. Of all available artifacts, the cell phone is the most widespread (*Measuring the Information Society: the ICT Development Index*, 2009): whether in high income countries it achieved the status of quasi-ubiquity, in countries of middle and low income it proves to be a primary for of network connectivity.

This new mobility changes the nature of interaction and social organization (Green & Haddon, 2009) and illustratively expresses the contemporary ubiquitous computing, a pervasive computerization that to some extent becomes indistinguishable in everyday life (Weiser, 1991).

The cell phone considerably generalized the portability of social connections. Communities are now becoming mobile and to a certain measure can be constantly accessed (Chayko, 2008). Therefore, journalism has to deal now not only with interactive (Web 2.0) but also portable communities. Mobile technologies and expressively the cell phone are a clear component of *citizen journalism*, which "is in some cases more direct, more open to public comment that the traditional forms, and is providing the news consumer alternative approaches to events" (Ling & Donner, 2009, p. 119).

Although local and national TV stations still maintain a prominent position in news consumption, research in U.S. reveals a solid trend towards accessing news through multiple platforms on a typical day (*The State of News Media 2013: An anual report on American Journalism*, 2013). Evidence is already available for how "people use their social networks and social networking technology to filter, assess, and react to news", depicting how "the ascent of mobile connectivity via smart phones has turned news gathering and news awareness into an anytime, anywhere affair for a segment of avid news watchers" (Purcell, Rainie, Mitchell, Rosentiel, & Olmstead, 2010).

Thus, "social media is rapidly becoming a competing driver of traffic. And far from obsolete, home pages are usually the most popular for most of the top news" being Google search engine the primary entry point. "Social media, however, and Facebook in particular, are emerging as a powerful news referring source. At five of the top sites, Facebook is the second or third most important driver of traffic. Twitter, on the other hand, barely registers as a referring source" (Olmstead, Mitchell, & Rosentiel, 2011).

The need to manage mobile online communities may never have faced journalism so clearly, especially considering four major trends affecting the production and reception of news today: news proliferation, news audience fragmentation, news migration online and news owner concentration (Lasorsa, 2010).

These are crucial trends to be acknowledged since that for the last decades traditional mass media – specifically in the case of print newspapers – have had a decline also in terms of advertising revenue and public trust (Gronke & Cook, 2007). In recent years digitization in journalism has also been accompanied by "organizational demands for

cost-cutting and profits, a growing distrust of elites generally, and a do-it-yourself culture that looks with increasing scorn on the specialized education and bureaucratic barriers to entry that professions cultivate" (Lewis, 2010, p. 3). Professional journalists are struggling for occupational control and jurisdiction over the objective (material) and subjective (rhetorical) delimitations of their legitimate territory.

Networked journalism is also being built upon a distinct online time-machine of timeless time (Castells, 2000) through non-linear editing (V. Campbell, 2004, p. 247), operating "a more compact time dimension impacting the news cycle" (Weiss & Joyce, 2009). If "for the foreign correspondent, instant satellite communications left little time for developing expertise in a specific country" (Utley, 1997, p. 4), with Internet "the time between witnessing a story and writing about it has been reduced to basically no time at all. Most newspapers have created a parallel online presence where news can be published instantly, without waiting for the ink-on paper version to reach readers" (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009a, p. 608).

This *socially networked Internet* (Lewis, 2010) represents a transformation from broadcast to self-cast and from here to a less asymmetrical mode of communication, i.e. from an exclusively one directional flow (from one-to-many) now tending to a more dialogic flow. This distinct media logic has been observed as already incorporated in the culture of some online journalists, for whom the main characteristic seems to be towards empowering audiences as active participants in the daily news (Deuze, 2002).

This depicted empowerment of the audiences, a traditionally extramedia force, can impact what content is published (Cassidy, 2008). Folksonomies (e.g. Delicious, Flickr, Tagzania), online social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) and user participation can be at this point fundamental elements in building specialized journalistic content (Vivar & Herreros, 2011) and fighting information exclusion by allowing users to transmit their needs (Pérez, 2011). On the other hand, they are also enhancing a trend to personalized news where editorial "decisions" are taken by computer algorithms and/or by end users (e.g. Google News and Fast Flip, News.me, Trove, RSS readers).

Since personalization works through implicit mechanisms – such as aggregated collaborative filtering, contextual recommendations, geo-targeted editions and profile-based recommendations – and explicit functionalities – like newsletters, homepage customizations, RSS feeds, SMS alerts, widgets – it directly impacts not only news

consumption and content diversity, but necessarily journalism economic context and the formerly conventional role of journalists as gatekeepers (Thurman, 2011).

While some of these new websites have no apparent editorial or hierarchical function, "in other cases the agenda can be set by an editor (…) It is not unusual for a mainstream medium to develop strategies of incorporating user-generated contents in its services, for example when audience members submit their own images and videos" (Metykova, 2009, p. 133) – for instance, CNN's iReport.

This movement towards an *on-demand journalism* (Heald, 2009) – not only users customizing their news, but also traditional mass media requesting from users their participation as witnesses – it is also opening renewed questions for journalistic narrative conventions and decision-making. It stimulates new dilemmas regarding the extent of connectivity-based storytelling and the desired level of users' participation in the narrative, which in turn have considerable implications for the meaning of the journalist as a professional identity and culture (Deuze, 2005). Arguably, in this evolving mediascape, professional journalists no longer have the monopoly of suggesting people what they need to know in order to self-govern themselves.

In recent years, social networks have been emerging as a new component of journalists work (Portillo, 2011), transforming online news production in the newsrooms towards a more collaborative work. Studies show that collectivistic, high-context communication culture is more supportive of a collaborative work environment; consequently, this approach tends to make the news accurate and comprehensive to the public (Weiss, 2008).

Information aggregation, for instance from social media and online comments, is now considered a central task within networked journalism (Grueskin, Seave, & Graves, 2011a). The evolving mechanisms of online sourcing suggest professional journalism as social networking, "including public co-production of news, interactivity between journalists, their readers and their sources, collaborative production models, ongoing editing and revision of news based on new information, and the need for site managers to develop an 'ethics on the run' in managing online site interaction" (Flew & Wilson, 2010, p. 139).

These evolving participatory avenues in newswork resonates produsage, a more open participation of users in news stories co-production, arguably less hierarchical, towards a continuous process of revision (Bruns, 2008). It enhances active users as

gatewatchers in collaborative online news production (Bruns, 2005), readers as gatekeepers (Shoemaker, Johnson, Seo, & Wang, 2010).

Previous studies strongly interpreted news production throughout the metaphor of a news factory model (Bantz, et al., 1980) in which newswork was divided in five steps: story ideation, task assignment, gather and structure materials, assemble materials and present newscast. Produsage now suggests a contemporary two-step flow gatekeeping process, shared among professional journalists and their publics.

If on one hand it may be now easier for politicians and government officials to address the public directly, on the other, journalism as social networking presents new possibilities for a monitorial citizenship, scanning a vast amount of information sources in the topic that are considered relevant or interesting (Deuze, 2008a).

Participation is consolidating as a norm in online journalism. It is now clear that the interpretation of professional journalism as cultivating occupational control and boundary work reveals a tension between former news culture and a mediamorphosis that potentiates a more open public participation (Hermida & Thurman, 2008; O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008). Convergence also reveals its face working a distinction among professional journalists' values between traditionalists and convergers: those who want to maintain a hierarchical and authoritative relationship with the publics/audiences, and those who argue that users shall be given a more active role in newswork (S. Robinson, 2010).

Some segments of professional journalists have been perceiving the evolving features of the networked journalism with an associated fear to lose their authority, as a journalistic value, over the agenda of public discourse (Hayes, Singer, & Ceppos, 2007). Others, are otherwise enhancing "citizen participation, which resides at the periphery of mainstream newswork, to become embraced as an ethical norm and a founding doctrine of journalism innovation" while "altering the rhetorical and structural borders of professional jurisdiction to invite external contribution and correction" (Lewis, 2010, p. xi).

News innovators tend to identify with the latter group, regarding journalism less as a proprietary occupation and more as an open-source practice to be shared. While actively proposing solutions for the professional-participatory tension they look to preserve fundamental ethical principles, discarding outdated practices, and recognizing participation as a renewed normative ethic principle. Although, it is important to note that newsroom structures may play a similar or even more substantial role than individual professional

beliefs in opening the news production process to user contributions (Paulussen & Ugille, 2008).

A map of the fundamental reasons why editors favor or disfavor "citizen journalism" reveals philosophical arguments as well as decisions based on practicality operating in both directions. Editors who disapprove it consider it to be theoretically incompatible with news production, a sense of professionalism as boundary work and the rejection of anonymity. Based on practicality they also reject it by its arguable unworkable condition, since they feel the obligation to cross-check all the information produced by citizen, which would overwhelm the already overworked staff.

On the other side of the mirror, the "convergers" tend to theoretically assume "citizen journalism" as a better way to connect their communities. At the same time, far from this philosophical acquaintance, more pragmatic editors see it as a way towards the outsourcing of newsgathering due to limited staff and budget (Lewis, Kaufhold, & Lasorsa, 2010).

Thus, it is crucial not to deterministically extrapolate conclusions from citizen participation in newswork. Further, tabloid newspapers are providing users the possibility to produce mostly popular and personal/everyday life oriented content, with little opportunity to generate news or information (Ornebring, 2008). Also, even if it is crucial to recognize that throughout the last decade weblogs became a new source of information for international news (Ardanaz & Menicucci, 2010; Besselink, 2011), discussions on the blogosphere are not restricted to particular kinds of news, but are wide-ranging, matching significantly well the home pages of traditional mass media (Thelwall, 2007).

In the field of crisis/disaster reporting, user-generated content has been mainly produced by "citizen journalists" and non-governmental organizations (Landau, 2011). Research has called the attention to the emergence of collaborative filters, showing that it is possible in to some extent to "detect rumors by using aggregate analysis on tweets" (Mendonza, Poblete, & Castillo, 2010).

Looking for renewed quality standards in networked journalism one obvious implication regards the ethical and legal responsibility of editorial decision-making: "If the content space is shared, is responsibility for the content itself also shared? Who decides what is credible, true, or even newsworthy in the first place? What happens to the prized journalistic norm of autonomy in this environment?" (Singer & Ashman, 2009, p. 4).

These critical philosophical and practical implications of integrating user-generated content in professional newswork are stimulating a *remix* of journalism quality standards, between a read/write and a read/only culture (Lessig, 2008, p. 28), and have been already accommodated in the editorial guidelines of some of the most relevant news players in international journalism (e.g. BBC, 2011; Christian, Jacobsen, & Minthorn, 2011; Hohmann & Committee, 2011; NPR, 2009; Reuters, 2011). These principles also led to the creation of new professional functions such as the social media editor, community editor, outreach editor or audience and engagement manager.

The migration from industrial to post-industrial journalism (C. W. Anderson & Bell, 2012) is a part of the emergent convergence culture (Jenkins, 2006). These mashup cultures (Sonvilla-Weiss, 2010) need now to accommodate the still essential ethical and legal duties and guarantees in the more dialogic aspiration of a new form of communication: the *mass self-communication*.

> The diffusion of Internet, mobile communication, digital media, and a variety of tools of social software have prompted the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time. The communication system of the industrial society was centered around the mass media, characterized by the mass distribution of a one-way message from one to many. The communication foundation of the network society is the global web of horizontal communication networks that include the multimodal exchange of interactive messages from many to many both synchronous and asynchronous. (Castells, 2007, p. 246)

The Internet openly questions one-way news flows whatever the former reference transmitter is (newspaper, radio, television, cinema). It is not exclusively or mainly a technological mediamorphosis, but one with profound implications within a cultural logic of its own (Deuze, 2008c). Publics/audiences "share news stories with their social networks, helping to dictate a story's distribution. They shape the discourse and coverage of the news. And more and more, they are helping to capture, write, and share the news themselves over the Internet" (Sagan & Leighton, 2010, p. 119).

For this reason, partially convergence can be interpreted as operating in the domain of reporters' functions, i.e. who produce news reports and how they are assembled. Collaborative news production have the ability to "subvert the unilateral distribution of information towards a reconfiguration of current journalistic mediation and they may generate other meanings on everyday social reality" (B. Becker & Mateus, 2011, p. 59).

This subversion of traditional newswork flows helps to understand why some stages of news production processes are still closed to citizen direct involvement (Domingo, et al., 2008) and how "on a cultural level, the widely shared occupational ideology of journalism serves to reproduce the dominant self-understanding of journalism among its practitioners, allowing the profession to remain operationally closed through processes of self-reference – up to and including a homogenization of the workforce" (Deuze, 2008d, p. 20).

A partial answer from journalists to convergence has been to reinforce a professional sense of self-perceived social importance through closure (Singer, 2010b; A. Williams, Wardle, & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011; Witschge & Nygren, 2009).

In this sense, "as individuals have grown dependent upon professionals, society as a whole has also grown dependent upon the professions. Hence it is essential to hold them accountable to public as well as private duties" (Jennings, et al., 1987, p. 3). Now, the pro-am concept suggests that, at least in some fields of knowledge, our exclusive dependency from former self-defining professionals is being challenged.

In contemporary complex societies, notoriously in the case of journalism, "there is no self-evident position for professions anymore, since they adhere to knowledge intensive occupations – knowledge that is no longer as exclusive as it used to be" (Wiik, 2010, p. 197). Technological innovations are reorganizing journalism economical and labor structures (Reinardy, 2011).

Some professional norms are being put to test, redefined and in some cases abandoned (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2001). Regarding the performativity of journalistic identity – "though journalists are bound to perform within the constraints imposed by the journalistic ideology, performances may equally serve as an act of resignification" (Bogaerts, 2011) – it is adjustably possible to say that the expanded availability in the access and control of the material basis of media is quickening a remix of the cultural or societal authority of professional journalists (Lowrey & Anderson, 2005).

In this sense, "the primary struggle for journalism today is one of negotiating the capacity of networked technologies for open, transparent, and dialogical forms of engagement with audiences, against professional defensiveness and reassertion of control" (Lewis, 2010, pp. 4-5). This is why digitization in journalism has been generally understood as a disruptive outcome putting professionalism, as occupational control, under pressure: it reawakens previous debates on occupational cultures and citizen participation (e.g. the

history of Public Journalism) by a tension between a *professional logic* seeking control over content versus a *participatory logic* demanding the distribution of that control over and through digital networks.

Before the digitization of journalism the role of the journalist was generally one of 1) to survey the world and report the facts as they are best understood; 2) to interpret those facts in terms of their impact on the local community or society at large; and 3) to provide opinion or editorial guidance on those facts (Pavlik, 2001b, p. 217).

Accordingly, in the past it has been argued that "the dominant producers determine the nature of the product, its marketing and distributions, and even its presentation. There is not a great deal of room for alternative producers, or for different conceptions and approaches to international news" (Sreberny-Mohammadi, et al., 1985, p. 53). Less than two decades later, authors already recognized that "the web provides a space where new producers interested in encouraging other voices can provide news" (Sreberny & Paterson, 2004, p. 11).

Even if international news reporting still suffers from being "elite-focused, conflictual and sensational, with a narrow parochial emphasis", leading to the argument that "if 'global' means giving 'dialogic' voices a chance to speak to each other without reproducing national ethnocentrism, then the world's media still fail to measure up" (Reese, 2010, p. 346). Studies already show that a younger generation of professional correspondents have a critical approach to issues communicated by officials and rely on the Internet as a primary source for background information (AIM, 2007).

In the scope of networked journalism it is now crucial to observe how journalists are coping with user-generated content in their newswork. An analysis on the press coverage of Twitter (2006-2009) reveals that despite some skepticism, newspapers, magazines and weblogs promote Twitter's diffusion (Arceneaux & Weiss, 2010).

Very few studies exist on how journalists use online social networks and on how they perceive their value for newswork. The existing available research on the agenda-building role of social media content in business/financial journalists' work (story ideation and sourcing) indicates a scarce use of it: only 7.5% of journalists indicated that social media is very important to their work, while 24.5% perceived it to be important. 34% considered social media to be of little or no importance. The surveyed journalists didn't perceive social media as improving their work. Learning needs is suggested as being in the root of the adoption gap (Lariscy, Avery, Sweetser, & Howes, 2009).

The reliance on established sources such as public relations (61%) and corporate spokespeople (59%) remains considerable, but journalists already admit to use Twitter (47%), Facebook (35%) and weblogs (30%) in the sourcing process. 42% also use weblogs as a source they don't know or visited before (Oriella, 2011).

Other studies suggest that younger journalists are the ones enhancing the use of social media and portraying an attitude towards a more collaborative form of journalism: 69% of the respondents claim to use social networking sites as a tool to assist in reporting; from these 67% use Facebook and 33% LinkedIn. Also, 52% use Wikipedia and 48% refer to Twitter or other micro-blogging sites. Further, 69% agree that Twitter is an increasingly important tool for journalism. 91% consent that new media and communications tools and technologies are enhancing journalism, while 30% are of the opinion that social media technologies and citizen journalism will ultimately lead to the demise of journalism as a profession (McClure & Middleberg, 2010).

Although, a more nuanced viewed is also brought by content analysis revealing how journalists are using the new communication artifacts. In the U.S., more often journalists express their opinion in Twitter, challenging the standard journalistic value of impartiality. To a less extent, they also provide accountability regarding their newswork; journalists working for national newspapers and television channels and for cable news networks are less likely to do it (Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2011).

### 3.4.3. A multidimensional network of correspondences

During the last decade, Internet has been consolidating as a source of information for international journalists (Escudero, 2005).

Among foreign correspondents working in China, the use of weblogs has been translated in great usefulness for their work: 90% follow blogs and most find them to be a valuable resource for story ideas especially for spotting emerging issues, recognizing that otherwise they would not know about them. These finding suggest that journalists with specialized beats use social media and weblogs more regularly than general reporters for sourcing and story ideation purposes (MacKinnon, 2007).

Since most respondents found difficulties to answer the question of whether weblogs are more or less reliable than other media, this finding suggests that the domestication of online social media by professional norms is still an ongoing process in

need of further clarification, quality standards and guidelines (MacKinnon, 2007). This reveals to be a particularly urgent task since China blogs are part of a "emerging *transnational micro public sphere*, and are playing a valuable role in countering Western media discourse on China" (Arnot, 2011), pointing to ongoing changes in the global media arena (Reese & Dai, 2009).

On the other hand, studies have also started to observe how present, active, and interactive are U.S. foreign correspondents on Twitter, and why do they use it. Findings reveal that reporters recur to the micro-blogging service to discuss current events where stationed and elsewhere, break news – broadcast journalists are more likely to use it for this purpose – promote their media outlet and share opinion. Regarding Twitter activity, 80% of users have made fewer than 500 tweets, 94% of users make fewer than two tweets a day. A typical correspondent has about 2.465 followers (Cozma, 2011).

Weblogs were already depicted as an augmentation and evolving challenge in war and conflict reporting. Warblogs have been translated by its informality and eyewitness experience, defying the traditional standards of news reporting. Modern international news reporting, sustaining a unidirectional flow of information, "relied upon the correspondent having a monopoly of information and the status of an expert by dint of being present on foreign soil and having general journalistic skills. Such a model becomes less tenable when news editors and readers have instant access to multiple voices" (Matheson & Allan, 2007, p. 14). Thus, there is an evident need of renewed partnerships between journalists and citizens in order to build an adjusted *multidimensional eyewitness model* for journalism in the network society (McGill, Iggers, & Cline, 2007).

As always have, technological changes are challenging previous stabilized meanings and practices of international news reporting (Hamilton, 2009; Perlmutter & Hamilton, 2007). Internet and its' graphical interface, the World Wide Web, and the associated emergence of nonconventional journalists are transforming previous meanings and implications of eyewitnessing as a journalistic keyword "in ways that appear to mute suspicions about its value as a method. It has moved (…) from a broadening of those who could fill the role of eyewitnessing to an absence of journalists and at times of individuals altogether" (Zelizer, 2007, p. 421), build on a technological interpretation of transparency, presuming that way journalism and news content are not human mediated constructions.

Contemporary journalism is largely dealing with eyewitnessing by outsourcing it (p. 422), allowing news organizations to claim their legitimacy based on the *epistemology of being*

*there,* even – or particularly – when professional journalists have not witnessed events themselves. For this reason, we argue contemporary international news reporting can be adjustably understood through the recognition of a distinct *multidimensional network of eyewitnesses*.

> Although not yet well understood, technology-driven changes are reshaping international news flows by lowering the economic barriers of entry to publishing and broadcasting and encouraging the proliferation of nontraditional international news sources. The audience – now fragmented and active – is far better able to choose and even shape the news. Consequently, a broader definition of foreign correspondence and of foreign correspondents is required to assess what consumers of news now know about the world (Hamilton & Jenner, 2003, p. 132)

Travel and communication technologies are also reshaping the modern notion of bureaus: "Now when news breaks in a remote corner of the world, correspondents can fly in and report live. The downside is that they have less time for gathering facts, working under the imperative to go live, which is much less expensive than highly edited and produced programming" (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009a, p. 599).

If in the 1960s the sociological imagination depicted the international reporter as "a cosmopolitan among cosmopolitans, a man in gray flannel who ranks very high in the hierarchy of reporters" (B. C. Cohen, 1965), now this elitist occupational culture seems to be challenged in the sense that "traditional foreign correspondents no longer exercise hegemony over foreign news. Taken as a whole, the new classes of foreign correspondents are neither so elite nor so easily defined in their personal characteristics, outlook, or work habits" (Hamilton & Jenner, 2003, p. 137).

The notion of a professional international news reporter has now to accommodate a more diverse constellation of ideas (values, attitudes, and beliefs), practices and artifacts. In short, international journalism as an expert culture is being tested. In that regard, it is crucial to historically recognize that the recruitment of non-professionals to report on international events is not a recent trend in foreign correspondence. It is actually present since its origins in modernity.

Previous studies regarding events that took place in early twentieth century (e.g. Russian revolutions, 1905 and 1917) already refer that even if "accounts of military conflicts and civilian uprisings had been written by participants since ancient times" they were then considered new because daily newspapers were hiring and sponsoring "civilian writers on the scene" with "vastly different backgrounds. Few studied journalism. It was a

field that people would almost fall into – sometimes for a brief time, sometimes for the rest of their lives". It is then important to note that "journalists in Russia included historians, artists, authors of children's books, would-be politicians, women's rights advocates, and socialists. These people varied greatly in their knowledge of Russia, but all were expected to shed light on the history shaping events during the first two decades of the twentieth century" (Brady, 2003, pp. 2-3).

Livingston and Asmolov (2010) argue that international news reporting is being confronted by a changing nature of information, supported by the microelectronics revolution, particularly the flowering of online digital networks. Since, authors state, foreign affairs journalism is historically attached to state and governing institutions, the erosion of socio-spatial constraints for collective action associated with distance and time is giving room to a different morphology of global governance, based on a scale-shifting between the local and the global.

These "global connections support new forms of journalism, which create politically significant new spaces within social systems, lead to social change, and privilege certain forms of power" (Reese, 2010, p. 345).

The electronically enabled networks are strictly linked to the rise of a networked structure of governance in which news organizations are nodes, among a wider involvement of non-state actors: advocacy networks, social movements, epistemic communities and social networks. With this "redistribution of epistemic power, both traditional foreign affairs reporting and the system of nation states it tends to cover have been thrust into a more complex political environment" (Livingston & Asmolov, 2010, p. 749).

Since narrative power is now more dispersed, the symbolic presentation of reality is synchronically networked one operative hypothesis is that "traditional news media and networks are in the midst of creating new news norms and routines that recognize the shift in global governance away from states (where news norms and routines are deeply engrained) to more fluid and unpredictable sources that do not enjoy the assumed reliability and predictability of officials" (p. 754).

Traditionally, time and space suggested a clearer role, norms and routines for foreign reporters: "With the alteration of both, for better or worse, the meaning of the profession has changed. Indeed, the very idea of foreign – not to mention corresponding – has been altered, almost beyond recognition" (p. 756).

This assertion is supported by Hjarvard when stating that "the very notions of 'international news' or 'foreign news' are no longer self-evident in a globalized world with more open boundaries and overlaps between the local, regional national and global levels" (2002, p. 97). Furthermore, in moments of crisis digital networks have allowed a proliferation of voices that are also being gradually observed by scholarly works (Andersen, 2012; Hermida, Lewis, & Zamith, 2012; Khondker, 2011; M. Knight, 2012; Mejias, 2011), from the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (2001), to Madrid (2004) and London (2005) bombings, the tsunami in East Asia (2004), the Katrina hurricane (2005), Mumbai attacks (2008), Iran's disputed elections (2009), Haiti earthquake (2010) and the more recent events of civil and military conflict situations in Tunisia, Egypt, Lybia (2011) and the tsunami in Japan (2011).

The fluidity of the contemporary situation is expressed through modern media cutting budgets and closing – or minimizing – overseas bureaus and, simultaneously, new actors from traditionally under-represented regions becoming international information producers. Foreign correspondents came to be perceived as an "endangered species" or has a "species development" (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009a, p. 596).

Fuller (2010) relates this occupational-morphosis with the decline of public trust in experts of all sorts, being particularly pronounced in the Standard Model of Professional Journalism, which "includes the disciplines of accuracy, disinterestedness in reporting, independence from the people and organizations reported upon or affected by the report, a mode of presentation sometimes called objective or neutral, and the clear labeling of what is fact and what is opinion" (p. 12) The author further suggests that "people doubt professional journalists even more than opinionated bloggers *because* of the journalists' claim of neutrality" (p. 91). In what concerns U.S., public trust in that news media reports the news fully, accurately and fairly has been consistently declining in the last five years (Gallup, 2010).

Observing some of the current trends in international news reporting it is possible to move forward modern definitions, discovering partnerships between news organizations and Internet services corporations (e.g. Kevin Sites in the Hot Zone), universities (e.g. Afghan 101), foundations (e.g. Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, Magnum Emergency Fund) and non-governmental organizations (e.g. Global Voices Online; Ushahidi). Also, from a business model perspective, one observes renewed forms of freelance international reporting (e.g. The Bureau of International Reporting) and the proliferation of mixed methods, from a blend of advertising, syndication and freemium (e.g. Global Post) to the

combination of citizen participation and "broker" (e.g. Demotix).

A distinct confederacy of correspondences is emerging: "Newsgathering abroad appears to be moving toward a system of multiple models co-existing and collectively providing information" (Cole & Hamilton, 2008, p. 806), supported by "a broader, more variegated class of foreign correspondents" (Hamilton & Cozma, 2009a, p. 609). These transformations are now a considerably important component of the larger ongoing discussion on *who is a journalist*.

Ugland and Henderson (2007) propose, from an ethical perspective, the distinction between *public communicators* – those who disseminate newsworthy information to others in a sporadic and unregimented way, for instance, using the Web – and *second-level journalists* – who gather and disseminate news more deliberately, regularly and conspicuously. The authors distinguish the latter category from *top-level journalists* "committed to gathering and telling stories in a particular way, one that honors the higher virtues that have traditionally shaped the profession" (p. 253), such as objectivity (independence, proportionality), comprehensiveness and accountability.

While *public communicators* conceptually conform to what has been traditional defined as a news source, the proposed definition for *second-level journalists* bear a resemblance to the *pro-am* notion, while challenging the idea that "the truth" can exclusively be managed by formally trained and educated experts and the conception of journalism as being primarily a product of structures or institutions: "Some professionals will seek to defend their endangered monopoly. The more enlightened will understand that knowledge is widely distributed, not controlled in a few ivory towers. The most powerful organizations will combine the know-how of professionals and amateurs to solve complex problems" (Leadbeater & Miller, 2004, p. 16).

For this reason, one operative way to study these emerging categories must be one that do not focus exclusively or primarily in its technological basis, but rather on their *content*, *function* and *method*. In the sense that "journalism has never been understood as residing in a particular medium, so for any definitions and categories to be useful, they must move beyond these structural features to consider the ways in which the medium is being used" (Ugland & Henderson, 2007, p. 255).

We know relatively well who the modern international reporters are and how they did – and still do – their work, supported by news organizations, spread over overseas bureaus, normatively privileging the *groundtruth* by means of eyewitnessing accounts. We

also have a considerable stabilized image of what their constraints are, the information flow inherent to their newswork and the representational deficits of their news production.

Regarding the contemporary scene the lack of systematized knowledge is evident. By one hand, some professional journalists often feel that their jurisdiction is under attack, as if a Trojan horse carrying opposite interpretations and acts is being deployed in the heart of their perceived professionalism, question legitimacy and their symbolic capital. This argument has been supportive of the recurrent perception of a sustained crisis in journalism, often implicitly forgetting that professional modern journalism was far from perfect (McChesney, 2011).

As has been studied in a different context (Zetka, 2001), when technical innovations are introduced into professional structures they are regulated by cultural scripts that prescribe specific relations and workflows. Even though, these scripts "may not be able to regulate effectively subsequent developments, and structural divisions may produce intra-occupational conflict and struggle over market turf" (p. 1495).

This state of flux in journalism has been transforming international news reporting challenging assumptions that "transnational news gathering is an exacting occupation for the professional newsmen and newswomen who put together the various stories, reports, rumors, and educated guesses that make up the daily international news file" (Hachten & Scotton, 2007, p. 129).

The study of the specific characteristics of online journalists, their perceived professional roles and norms is further complicated by the fact that "many 'mature media' organizations are active players in online news domains and these have been moving towards more integrated newsrooms in recent years" (Preston & Metykova, 2009, p. 40). On the other hand, if some *second-level journalists* conceive themselves somehow differently, others actually embrace the label of journalist, "either to secure rights or privileges or to position themselves as trustworthy arbiters. What many of them seek is simply the recognition that their work has value and that it is to be believed, something that, to some anyway, is connoted by the word 'journalist' (Ugland & Henderson, 2007, p. 255). Studies indicate that webloggers who regard their work as a form of journalism show a greater propensity to "inform and influence readers, write about public affairs, and behave as a more traditional journalist" (Zuñiga, et al., 2011, p. 1).

International journalism has been a very porous occupation in terms of social mobility. In 1988 Abbott recognized that "journalism remains a very permeable

occupation; mobility between journalism and public relations is quite common, as is mobility between journalism and other forms of writing" (Abbott, 1988, p. 225).

Now the technical constraints are once more changing. Text, motion film and graphics, audio and photographs can now be presented in the same unified platform. If news stories are used as "professional equipment, mechanisms that they [newspersons] may apply to transform encountered events into their occupational product – accounts of events or news stories" (Tuchman, 1976, p. 93), how are foreign correspondents using their multimedia storytelling equipment in their daily news production routines? And, concomitantly, how is this factor influencing journalists' socio-professional characterization and journalism societal role?

Helping to build some systematic knowledge from the considerably complex contemporary mediascape of international news reporting, some typologies have already been proposed, mostly regarding time involvement in the region covered, social or/and national origins, employment relationship, professionalism as boundary work and newsgathering practices.

Some suggest that the contemporary field of international news reporting is now accommodating a profound multidimensional array of actors and practices from the traditional foreign correspondent, the parachute journalist, the foreign foreign correspondent, the local foreign correspondent, the foreign local correspondent, the in-house foreign correspondent, the premium service foreign correspondent and the amateur correspondent (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004, pp. 313-314).

Others, also recognizing this broader landscape of international news reporting and the associated "moment of uncertainty and confusion" state that "different groups are experimenting with a wealth of new models designed to produce international news" (Zuckerman, 2010, p. 69) – the *new professionals* (e.g. GlobalPost; ProPublica), *citizen newsrooms* (e.g. Demotix; Nowpublic), *aggregators* (e.g. Breaking Tweets; Global Voices Online; Ushahidi).

Before this *mediadiversity* "foreign news coverage and correspondents no longer conform to a single elite model such as dominated the profession in the last century. Given the dedication and daring of innovators, new methods for gathering and delivering foreign news will continue to emerge" (Hamilton, 2010, p. 5). In the specific case of Africa, not only professional media capacity has been increasing in certain regional levels (Frère, 2007), as "the internet and in particular the take-up of mobile phones across the continent is

opening up new means of reporting and distributing information (…) The gatekeeper role for Western and global media is falling away in Africa as it is elsewhere" (Sambrook, 2010, p. 82).

In summary, international news reporting has been portrayed by research through a narrative of decline of modern elite correspondents and the simultaneous proliferation of alternate information sources, actors and news practices (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004).

An ambiguous idea of a global newsroom has become a norm in contemporary journalism, but also one that "anyone can be a journalist by reporting what is happening in any part of the world" (Tsetsura, Craig, & Baisnée, 2011, p. 166). However, these claims still need further conceptual maturation – Is eyewitness the same that journalism? What differences can we find in verification norms and ethics? – and empirical evidences that prove capable of supporting a different type of journalism and reporter produced within the multidimensional network society.

Differently from annunciating the disappearance of international news reporting, a more evolutionary perspective is needed towards a cultural, political and professional reform in global journalism (Hafez, 2011), preserving a modern fundamental rationale: "There must be efficient men in all strategic news centers. This is axiomatic and expensive, but it is the only way in which prompt and intelligent news coverage is possible" (Desmond, 1937, p. 39).

# CHAPTER 4 – METHODOLOGY

For the last four decades, studies on international communication have depicted news agencies as "major players in processes of globalization while they are also of increasing importance in underpinning the globalization activities of *other* players on world markets" (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998, p. 2). This relative importance is significantly justified by the fact that "representations of the foreign in news reports frequently originate with raw material supplied by wire services" (Mody, 2010, p. 13).

News agencies, especially U.S. and European news organizations, have now a vast and consolidated body of literature (e.g. Bielsa, 2007; Boyd-Barrett, 1980; Boyd-Barrett, 2000; Rantanen, 2004). This considerable array includes also works on the former non-aligned countries (e.g. Coordinating Committe, 1983; Kirat & Weaver, 1985).

If news agencies personify modern international communication, "they emerge from modernity and reinforce it through simultaneous construction of global and national 'imaginaries'" (Boyd-Barrett, 2000, p. 300), a renewed task for researchers has emerged: to address and consolidate an equivalent approach to the emerging actors in the field of international journalism in the network society, particularly the developing work of citizen media workers.

This study is based on the contemporary multidimensionality of networks in the work of international news reporters across Sub-Saharan Africa. In order to implement this research we are aware that we need to "specify multiple types of objects and multiple types of relations" (Castells & Monge, 2011, p. 789). The global network perspective assumed for this study "takes into account both the importance of local spaces and actors, and how they are positioned relative to a multitude of forces beyond the immediate locale" (Reese, 2010, p. 349).

This thesis observes three particular dimensions in international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa:

1. **Socio-demographics:** demographic and occupational characterization;
2. **News culture:** values, attitudes and beliefs;
3. **Newswork:** appropriation of technology, labor conditions, and impending constraints;

## 4.1. Socio-demographics: demographic and occupational characterization

Previous studies resorted to surveys in order to reveal the socio-demographic constitution of foreign press corps (Hess, 1996, 2005; Maxwell, 1956; Nosaka, 1992). Although, these studies have mainly addressed U.S. reporters working overseas and, alternatively, international reporters based in the U.S. They are now years old and don't contemplate the emerging and crucial questions brought by media convergence. Currently, none systematic and updated study is available on the socio-demographics of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically one covering both professionals and Pro-Ams. As such, the first research questions for this thesis are:

> **RQ1**: Who are the international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, concerning: age, sex, years of experience in journalism, years of experience in international news reporting, years of experience in current post, main area of education, and level of education?
>
> **RQ2**: Who are the international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, concerning: type of news organization, number of organizations they work for, function in news work, number of team members, and type of team members?

## 4.2. News culture: values, attitudes, and beliefs

Following Hanitzsch (2007) theoretical work, this study is articulated across the cognitive, evaluative and performative levels of international news reporters' news culture, i.e. their interpretation of news work, their evaluation of professional worldviews, occupational norms, and practices.

Journalists' culture has been theorized as the interaction of their *ideas* (values, attitudes and beliefs), *practices* and *artifacts*. In this sense, journalists are not detached from cultural considerations: "They belong to a specific culture and to specific professional subcultures" (Ginneken, 1998, p. 65). Therefore, in this context, professionalism works as a subculture of norms and values that informs journalists' socialization.

International news reporters work has been described as a variance of cosmopolitanism, "amongst the most celebrated transnational migrants of our times" (Hannerz, 2007, p. 301). For that reason, we inquire:

**RQ3:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa value empiricism, considering original fieldwork and eyewitness?

**RQ4:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa value professionalization?

**RQ5:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive themselves as cultural translators considering: contribution to society by providing knowledge about distant realities and language fluency?

**RQ6:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive Africa's media image as being balanced considering: the overall news coverage by professional foreign correspondents and the overall coverage by Pro-Ams?

### 4.3. News work: appropriation of technology, labor conditions, and impending constraints

Journalism practice is inseparable from its material basis. Technological innovations have the potential to transform its social role (V. Campbell, 2004; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Sreberny & Paterson, 2004). For this reason, considering the short-term developments based on transformations on microelectronics and digitization, we ask:

**RQ7:** Are international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa globally connected concerning: Internet access, its frequency and purpose of use?

**RQ8:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive Internet as benefiting the overall quality and quantity of news reporting from the region?

Regarding convergence (Deuze, 2008c; Jenkins, 2006; S. Robinson, 2010), cross media (Erdal, 2011), multimedia, cross-platform (Deuze, 2004) and mash-up journalism (Sonvilla-Weiss, 2010; Tejedor, 2007), we look at international news reporters' production routines and raise the question:

**RQ9:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive technical preparation as being important in a convergent media environment?

Particularly regarding Web 2.0 (Cao, Klamma, & Martini, 2008; Murugesan, 2007; O'Reilly, 2005), the emerging politics of networked information (Sreedharan, et al., 2011), the socially networked Internet (Lewis, 2010) and, particularly, user-generated content and produsage (Bruns, 2008):

**RQ10:** How do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa position themselves in networked journalism, concerning: maintenance of a personal weblog and/or website, an active account in one or more online social networks, perception of credibility of information from online social networks and online search engines, participation of public in newswork, direct collaboration between journalists and citizens, and ethical standards?

Media convergence is resulting in a-typical working conditions expressed by a "growing amount of freelancers, the shortening of labor contracts, the downward pressure on financial remuneration, the working hours that are difficult to combine with a regular family life and the limited chances for upward function mobility" (Balcytiene, et al., 2011, p. 224). Thus:

**RQ11**: What are international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa labor conditions, concerning: socio-economic typologies, perception about financial situation and social security, legal protection, career expectations, and work-family relations?

Considering international reporters' news work as a praxis (Deuze, 2008d; Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009) being socially constructed throughout regulative norms (Ryfe, 2006) that are an occupational answer to a vast array of constraints, we ask:

**RQ12:** What are the most relevant constraints that impend over the news work of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, considering: audience perception and feedback, beats, competition, newsgathering activities and sources.

## 4.4. Rationale for mixed method and triangulation

Any research method imposes specific perspectives on reality. It is essential for every social science research project to explicitly recognize that 1) theory, method and analysis are intertwined; decisions on one level affect the other; 2) the collected data and its interpretation are never exempt from the theory underlying the selected method; 3) theories can be constructed from concepts and relationships, and concepts can be measured using indicators. Indicators need to be evaluated in terms of its validity and reliability (Gilbert, 2008).

Data gathering cannot be artificially separated from theoretical and conceptual predefinitions: "Data are intricately associated with the motivation for choosing a given subject, the conduct of the study, and ultimately the analysis" (Berg, 2001, p. 4).

We deploy in this study a mixed-method rationale based on the notion of triangulation research methodology interpreted as 1) data triangulation, i.e. multiple data-collection technologies designed to measure the defined concepts (D. T. Campbell, 1956) and as 2) lines of action, i.e. multiple theories and methodologies (Denzin, 1970).

This approach is crucial not only due to its combination of different data, but also by the possibility to relate them through processes of confirmation and/or exclusion, assessing its validity during research and not only in the end. This research design is based on iteration rather than a unidirectional linear progression, allowing the researcher to move beyond the otherwise unilateral limitations of quantitative and qualitative standpoints when taken separately.

Further, not only this ability to address complex social processes in the study of international news reporters must be recognized, as it is reinforced by the worrying absence of in-depth studies regarding foreign correspondents' work, routines, conditions, structures, processes, functions, roles, tasks, effects and perspectives are from contemporary journalism studies (Hahn & Lonnendonker, 2009). Simultaneously, it is a powerful proposal to address the limitations and difficulties of cross-cultural comparative studies, expressed by the understatement of "heterogeneities within cultures being compared when focusing on differences between the units of analysis (…) sometimes variances within cultures may be greater than variations across cultural boundaries" (Hanitzsch, 2008, p. 97).

### 4.4.1. The online survey: epistemological advantages and limitations

The transnational nature of international news reporters has found in the social survey a useful methodological approach: it allows researchers to "make general descriptive statements about the nature of these journalists and their adherence to certain professional tenets" (Reese, 2001, p. 174).

Despite this unavoidable usefulness as a mean to allow weighted generalizations (external validity) through a self-completion questionnaire in a relatively short time for reduced costs, the survey comes also with the epistemological peril of subsuming distinct cultural settings under the quantitative umbrella: besides not looking directly to subjects' behavior but rather to what subjects say they do, another weakness "is that they often do not answer 'why' and 'how' questions very well because most of the questions force respondents to choose among fixed response categories" (D. Weaver, 2008, p. 107).

To a certain extent, surveys are becoming victims of their own previous success – for instance, among telemarketers – in part due to privacy concerns. This is "especially applicable to surveying journalists, who are likely to be more critical of questions asked and less willing to be forced into choosing mutually exclusive response categories, than are members of more general publics" (p. 109). For this reason, the addition of more open-ended questions is advisable, although demanding more time to analysis. Following this rationale, we reserved the more open-questions for the semi-structured interviewing process.

Although measurement is often essential to empirical research, especially when looking to synthesize the most common characteristics of a group, this quantified statistical data must be balanced and substantiated by a qualitative approach. Surveys have particular limitations when the research questions deal with the actual praxis and not only with its self-portrait constructed by the respondent (Buckingham & Saunders, 2004).

It is then crucial to cross-evaluate the interpretation of the statistical data with detailed – descriptive as well as analytical – *in loco* insights from international news reporters' daily news work routines, with each mode of analysis providing the researcher diverse, complementary insights and levels of analysis.

#### 4.4.1.1. Sample definition

In defining a human sample for social science research purposes one basic need is to identity a smaller group of subjects that will serve as a starting point to make inferences about the larger group of people. We departed for this study based on a mix of purposive/judgmental and theoretical nonprobability sample[22]: while not requiring a list of all possible elements in a full population, it requires 1) an effort to create a kind of quasi-random sample and/or 2) a clear idea about what group(s) the sample may reflect (Berg, 2001, p. 31). At the same time, we purposively sought "respondents who are most likely to aid theoretical development by extending and even confounding emerging hypothesis" (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, p. 52).

This methodological imposition was due to four major constraints that shall not be underestimated:

First, if in some world regions and countries "simple or systematic random sampling of journalists is a fairly easy task because there are reasonably up-to-date and complete lists of journalists who are required to belong to a national union or other type of professional organization, or to be licensed or certified in some manner" (D. Weaver, 2008, p. 111), this is generally not the case of Sub-Saharan Africa: although some organizations' databases exist, the accuracy of available data poses clear challenges with regard to its immediate use.

Second, the task is further difficult since we are studying not only professional news reporters but also citizen media workers. In this latter category, not all the citizen media workers perceive themselves as journalists. Accordingly, there is no comprehensive systematic list of their names besides the one owned by the organizations themselves.

Third, the corporate policy of some news organizations, particularly international news agencies, explicitly prohibits their news workers to participate in surveys. Consequently, these corporations don't immediately facilitate access to their workers' contacts.

Fourth, in the considerably understudied field of international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa it is noticeably difficult to have an accurate, comprehensible and

[22] Due to iteration in research design and operationalization we purposely generated an effect towards snowball sampling. Subjects were asked for the names and contacts of other people with similar attributes. E.g. "Do you know any other foreign correspondent in the region and/or the continent?"

updated register of the freelance media workers (professional or not) moving across the continent. Traditionally they comprise a very large part of the foreign correspondents' full universe (Hess, 1996, 2005). Their intrinsic mobility and transnational nature are further constraints when trying to stabilize a trustworthy database for sampling purposes.

For these reasons, the raw contact data for this study was gathered through the direct contact with professional journalists and citizen media workers themselves and the careful examination of existing contact databases from the Foreign Correspondents' Association of East Africa (FCAEA), the Association de la Presse Etrangère au Sénégal (APES), the Foreign Correspondents Association of Southern Africa (FCASA), the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Uganda (FCAU), and the European Journalism Centre (EJC).

Although useful as a starting point for further inquiry and snowball sampling, the contact lists from some foreign correspondents' associations (e.g. FCAEA) showed some inconsistency, with membership combining professional journalists, aid agencies', human rights organizations' and United Nations' public information officers. On the other hand, due to the inherent mobility of international news reporters, these lists were very often outdated.

Complementarily, contacts were established with a vast array of African journalists' unions and associations : Union des Professionels des Medias du Benin (UPMB), Burundi Journalists' Union (BJU), Associação dos Jornalistas de Cabo Verde, Syndicat National des Journalistes du Cameroun (SNJC), Fédération Syndicale des Travailleurs de la Communication (Congo Brazzaville), Union Nationale des Journalistes de Côte d'Ivoire (UNJCI), Association of Djiboutian Journalists, National Journalists Union of Ethiopia (ENJU), Gambia Press Union, Ghana Journalists' Association, Association des Journalistes de Guinée, Journalists Union of Lesotho, Press Union of Liberia (PUL), Union Nationale des Journalistes du Mali (UNAJOM), Forum of Mauritian Journalists, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Syndicat National des Professionnels de la Presse (DR Congo), Rwanda Journalists Association (ARJ), Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), Sudanese Union of Journalists, Tanzania Union of Journalists, and the Union des Journalistes Indépendants du Togo (UJIT).

Concerning citizen media organizations' workers, the sample was constituted by Global Voices Online – Sub-Saharan Africa group members.

All the collected contacts were tracked and compiled in function of five main pre-established criteria: 1) Professionalism (Professional/Pro-Am); 2) Business model (Profit/Non-Profit); 3) Geopolitical historical affiliation (Global North/Global South/Cosmopolitan); 4) Intended audience (International/Domestic and/or Regional); 5) Main publication platform (News agency/Newspaper/Magazine/Radio/TV/Online).

| | |
|---|---|
| **Purposive sample based on**: Profit; Geopolitical historical affiliation: Global North; Intended audience: International; Professional journalism; Main publication platform: News Agency.<br><br>E.g. **Reuters** | **Purposive sample based on:** Non-profit; Geopolitical historical affiliation: Global South; Intended audience: Domestic/Regional; Professional journalism; Main publication platform: News Agency.<br><br>E.g. **Inter Press Service** |
| **Purposive sample based on:** Profit; Geopolitical historical affiliation: Global North; Intended audience: Domestic/Regional; Professional journalism and Citizen Media; Main publication platform: Online website.<br>E.g. **Global Post** | **Purposive sample based on:** Non-Profit; Geopolitical historical affiliation: Cosmopolitan; Intended audience: Cosmopolitan; Citizen Media; Main publication platform: Online website.<br><br>E.g. **Global Voices Online** |

**Table 1 - Criteria for purposive sample constitution**

### 4.4.1.2. Survey design

While conducted to collect information about attitudes, beliefs and behavior, through its design surveys can have a direct effect on the answers by participants (Iarossi, 2006). For this reason it was crucial to establish guidelines in order not only to facilitate responses from the participants in this study, but also to minimize bias and error from the surveyor.

Even if all the established fundamental criteria for other survey administration strategies (e.g. on paper, face-to-face) still apply, an online self-administered questionnaire poses specific research challenges concerning minimum computer literacy (Dillman, 2007). Critical demands arise from the need to guarantee respondents have access to the Internet

and understand how to navigate and fill it. This imposes a need to establish a standard visualization through different operating systems, screen configurations, web browsers and bandwidth availability (Thomas, 2004).

A sample of potential respondents was considered to assess potential needs for revision and improvement in survey design (Fink, 2003b). In order to strength the online survey reliability, internal consistence and validity, a pilot test was implemented in October 2011 among a random sample of professional journalists and Global Voices Online contributors (editors). The main objective was to check wording, technical jargon and conceptual clarity, spellchecking, and also navigation structure.

This pilot test resulted in some recommendations that led to clarification in question building; other questions – notoriously open-questions – were simply erased and transferred to the semi-structured interview process.

The final version of the online survey comprehended a total of 33 blocks of questions, consisting of a mix of closed questions (single answer and multiple answer), text-based questions (E.g. city and country where you currently work), sentences that the respondents were asked to evaluate according to the agree/disagree Likert scale and ranking questions where respondents were asked to order items (activities) from most to less frequent. The final version of the used questionnaire can be consulted on Appendix I[23].

Being an online research instrument, privacy issues arise regarding personal data from the participants. In order to guarantee strict security, privacy and anonymity to the participants, the online self-administered questionnaire used in this research was created with resource to the Qualtrics' online survey platform hosted on a dedicated server at the University of Texas at Austin.

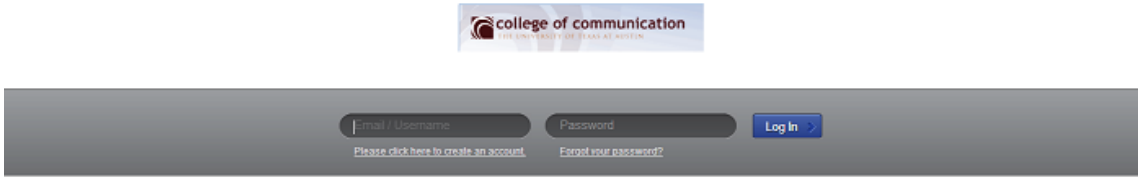


**Figure 1 - Qualtrics' online survey homepage (UT Austin)**

[23] In order to simplify the graphical presentation and navigation of our online survey, some sentences that the respondents were asked to evaluate according to the agree/disagree Likert scale were conveniently aggregated in one same block. For this reason, those 33 blocks are constituted by 48 statistically autonomous questions.

Ethical principles were strictly followed in order to protect human subjects and personal or private data (Fink, 2003b). Our online survey addressed professional journalists and Pro-Ams working for citizen media organizations across Africa often under physical and/or psychological risks, and persecution worries.

For this reason, not only a strict and draconian guarantee of privacy and data protection was issued, as in order to explicitly respect the rule of reflexivity in social science (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 72) the researcher felt the need to and was advised by some facilitators to refer his own professional experience as a journalist to illustrate the awareness for the requirement to strictly preserve all data in absolute safety. Anonymity guarantees were explicitly communicated since generally "respondents are more willing to answer 'sensitive' questions about personal behaviors and beliefs when surveys are anonymous (…) that when they are simply promised confidentiality" (Fink, 2003a, p. 19).

In addition to this a tag has been added to the survey to prevent search engines from indexing it. Access to the created online questionnaire was only possible by invitation and was protected by a password. Both the hyperlink to the survey platform and the associated unique password was always sent to the personal e-mail of the participant. As soon as the participant reached the survey homepage he was prompted to introduce the correct password. In order to clearly situate the scientific intervening institutions, a straightforward statement was integrated in the form of a survey header.


**Figure 2 - Online survey password menu**

Also, the survey was only available online for a specified date range. After that an automated message would appear stating that the survey had expired.


**Figure 3 - Online survey expiration message**

Special concerns were attended considering language use (e.g. avoiding slang, colloquial expressions, jargon and technical terms), number of questions (length and timing), standard response choices, format, social cultural and economic context (Fink, 2003a). For this last reason, the original survey in English was translated to French and to Portuguese.

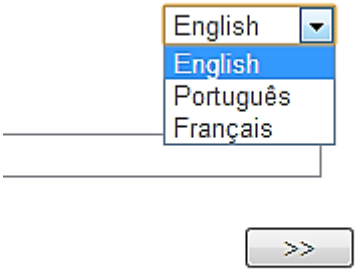


**Figure 4 - Online survey available language options**

A completion/progress indication across screens (pages) was also added in order to allow respondents to have constantly a clear notion of the ongoing process. Accordingly, a "back button" was available, enabling respondents to change their previous answers.

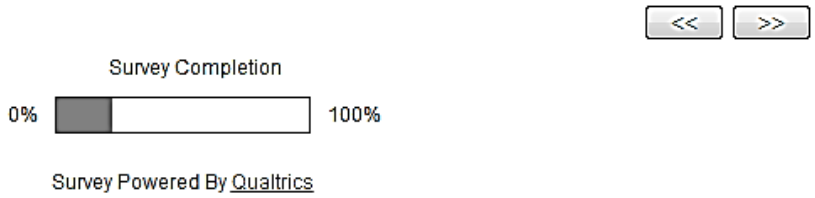


**Figure 5 - Online survey progression indication bar and back button**

One week was defined as the automated wait period before partially completed surveys were closed and data recorded. The recipient couldn't continue to take the survey once the data was recorded. Also, a security mechanism was activated to prevent "ballot box stuffing" and keep respondents from taking the survey more than once.

Accompanying instructions were provided for individual questions:


**Figure 6 - Online survey accompanying instructions**

If respondents neglected to answer any question, the online survey was programmed to prompt them to go back and fill in the missing data. Although we consider this option not absolutely free of some ethical questions – while respondents may deliberately not answer the question – it represents a reasonable compromise in order to guarantee convenient completion rates.


**Figure 7 - Online survey missing data message**

Since response rate is a fairly omnipresent concern in literature dealing with online surveys (Fink, 2003b; Thomas, 2004), reminders were sent two times during the immediately following week (Appendix II).

The survey was designed and tested in order to be completed in 8 to 10 minutes, depending on the technical particularities of access to the Internet. Despite this effort, survey statistics show that the median duration of response was 29 minutes.

We are led to admit that these longer durations are reasonably justified by two important intervening factors.

The first, the multitasking nature of Internet navigation: the used survey would stay active even if the respondent navigated away from the webpage. This means that respondents could, for instance, check their e-mail or navigate to other web locations while answering to the questionnaire.

Second, we must keep in mind the structural constraints regarding Internet access in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly access to broadband connections. Even if growth in bandwidth has been facilitating broadband uptake in the Developing World – particularly in the case of mobile-broadband networks – profound disparities between World regions are still notorious in terms of available Internet bandwidth per Internet user: almost 90,000

bit/second in Europe, compared with 2000 bit/second in Africa (*The World in 2011: ICT Facts and Figures*, 2011).

Particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of individuals using the Internet is of 11.2%, compared to a World mean of 30.2% (*The Little Data Book on Information and Communication Technology*, 2012). Power outages must also be considered: official reports consider them as a key factor regarding the slow pace of economic structural transformation (*Sub-Saharan Africa: Maintaining Growth in an Uncertain World*, 2012).

Following the referred pre-established criteria regarding non-random sample and the specific research design it was possible to collect answers from a total of 124 respondents, with a completion rate of 100 percent.

Regarding respondents' location in Sub-Saharan Africa (Table 2), we were able to consider 117 valid answers (94.35%) covering 41 sub-Saharan countries. Seven answers (5.65%) were considered invalid for this specific question since respondents interpreted it regarding their exact location at the time of completing the questionnaire, while in vacations (n=3) or in a special assignment task outside Sub-Saharan Africa (n=1), but also due to the inherent characteristics of the studied citizen media organization (n=3), and not the location of their post in foreign correspondence.

| N.º | Country | Number of answers | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Angola | 1 | 0,9 |
| 2 | Benin | 2 | 1,7 |
| 3 | Burkina Faso | 1 | 0,9 |
| 4 | Burundi | 1 | 0,9 |
| 5 | Cameroon | 2 | 1,7 |
| 6 | Cape Verde | 1 | 0,9 |
| 7 | Central Africa Republic | 2 | 1,7 |
| 8 | Chad | 1 | 0,9 |
| 9 | D.R. Congo | 3 | 2,6 |
| 10 | Ethiopia | 1 | 0,9 |
| 11 | Gambia | 1 | 0,9 |
| 12 | Ghana | 3 | 2,6 |
| 13 | Guinea | 1 | 0,9 |
| 14 | Guinea-Bissau | 2 | 1,7 |
| 15 | Ivory Coast | 4 | 3,4 |
| 16 | Kenya | 20 | 17,1 |
| 17 | Lesotho | 2 | 1,7 |
| 18 | Liberia | 1 | 0,9 |
| 19 | Madagascar | 1 | 0,9 |
| 20 | Malawi | 4 | 3,4 |
| 21 | Mali | 1 | 0,9 |
| 22 | Mauritania | 1 | 0,9 |
| 23 | Mauritius | 1 | 0,9 |
| 24 | Mozambique | 2 | 1,7 |
| 25 | Namibia | 1 | 0,9 |
| 26 | Niger | 1 | 0,9 |
| 27 | Nigeria | 8 | 6,8 |
| 28 | Rwanda | 3 | 2,6 |
| 29 | São Tomé and Príncipe | 1 | 0,9 |
| 30 | Senegal | 9 | 7,7 |
| 31 | Seychelles | 1 | 0,9 |
| 32 | Sierra Leone | 3 | 2,6 |
| 33 | South Africa | 7 | 6,0 |
| 34 | South Sudan | 1 | 0,9 |
| 35 | Swaziland | 1 | 0,9 |
| 36 | Tanzania | 1 | 0,9 |
| 37 | Togo | 2 | 1,7 |
| 38 | Uganda | 12 | 10,2 |
| 39 | Zambia | 2 | 1,7 |
| 40 | Zanzibar | 1 | 0,9 |
| 41 | Zimbabwe | 4 | 3,4 |
| | **Total** | **117** | **100** |

**Table 2 - Online survey participants/country base ratio**

### 4.4.2. Multi-sited ethnography: epistemological advantages and limitations

Ethnography has been praised in the universe of social sciences research by its ability to permit a careful documentation of situations and self-narratives through thick description (Geertz, 1973). It is profoundly founded in the essential theoretical basis of symbolic interactionism: the everyday subjective understandings and perceptions of people about people construct the cultural meanings and their social world (Blumer, 1969; Jensen & Jankowski, 1991; Mead, 1967).

Since "our picture of how the world works is integrally tied to how we work in the world. By acting in accordance with our conception of the way things are we concertedly make them the way they are" (Fishman, 1980, p. 3). This qualitative approach to research enhances "a way to explore the nature of news as a form of cultural meaning making – its creation, content and dissemination". By observing in site how newswork operates in specific and variable conditions, "ethnographers problematize easy assumptions about what news means and does across cultures (Bird, 2010, p. 1).

In the scope of this study this careful examination is particularly needed while interpreting the emerging senses of what it *actually* means for news workers to be a foreign correspondent. We then argue for the need of empirically grounded research, where "data form the foundation of our theory and our analysis of these data generates the concepts we construct" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2) in order to test some of the previous assumptions regarding international news reporters' culture and newswork, and particularly online participatory journalism as a mode of civic engagement (Rannikko, 2010) within globalization processes (Robertson, 1992).

This ethnographic record (Spradley, 1979) openly recognizes that "social practice – the ways in which various rituals, ideologies, and structures are reproduced by social actors in concrete local situations – is located at the intersection of culture and social structure, and it is in that direction that theoretically and empirically meaningful global communication research should forge ahead" (Kraidy & Murphy, 2008, p. 351).

By adopting this approach, we observe "the ideational and pragmatic aspects of interaction and communication between collective and individual actors on the global scene", an aspect of global reality construction that until the last decade "has been grossly neglected" (Robertson, 1997, p. 75).

Since the researcher has been developing his professional journalistic career in the field of international news reporting and documentary filmmaking, we are crucially aware for the need of bringing "reflexivity – the process of engaging in mutual recognition of, and, adaptation with, others" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 72) to the surface of this study.

The frank recognition of this simultaneously in and out position – the journalist and the researcher – proved to be a relevant step in gaining personal and institutional trust and thus access to the participants.

Our methodological approach is comprehended within multi-sited ethnography, recognizing

> the adaptation of long-standing modes of ethnographic practices to more complex objects of study. Ethnography moves from its conventional single-site location, contextualized by macro-constructions of a larger social order, such as the capitalist world system, to multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies such as the "local" and the "global", the "lifeworld" and the "system" (Marcus, 1995, p. 95)

We deploy our study in three key historical geographical hubs in professional foreign correspondence from Sub-Saharan Africa: Nairobi (Kenya), in East Africa, Dakar (Senegal), in West Africa, and Johannesburg (South Africa) in Southern Africa.

In these ethnographies simultaneously in and out the world system the epistemological advantage point of recording data in multiple locals (Nairobi, Dakar, and Johannesburg) may come with the associate shortcoming of a more circumstantial or less intensive presence in field. Despite this unavoidable limitation we argue that to date multi-sited ethnography is one of the most robust and adequate research approaches to the flows of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in the diffuse time-space and local-global nexus of the network society.

Further, in the scope of science and technology (Hine, 2007), and particularly in digital media studies and innovation in journalism (Lewis, 2010), this methodological path is now consolidating as an answer to "account for the digital aspect of cultural practices while also taking into account that those digital practices do not exist as separate (or separable in terms of our research) from other social and cultural practices" (Walker, 2010, p. 23).

The initial steps towards the deployment of this study were the vivid occasion to experience some difficulties regarding formal public access to some relevant participants. This was notoriously the case of some international news agencies, formally and

clairvoyantly answering our access request with the following electronic message: "Afraid our corporate policy is not to participate in surveys".

This notorious constraint led the researcher to contact individual journalists, aiming to build a "snowball effect" towards a consistent contact database. In these cases, following strict ethical guidelines, all the names of informants – and the associated support network – are kept confidential and anonymous, since the disclosure of this information can prove to be sensitive regarding job security.

Social research cannot avoid to consider the profound richness of direct and personal narratives as a mode of knowing and a mode of communication in social science and particularly in the field of journalism studies (Czarniawska, 2004).

The deployment of unobtrusive methods, presumed to reduce the influence of the researcher's presence, is also advisable in social research: "Interviews and questionnaires create attitudes in part because respondents try to manage impressions of themselves in order to maintain their standing in the eyes of an interviewer" (Lee, 2000, p. 2). Occasionally, in the field this impressions' management was articulated with an assumption directed to the researcher: "You know how it is. You've done it yourself". The researcher was being treated as a "native speaker" from the studied culture.

While this could prevent informants to reveal through speech relevant aspects of explicit and tacit cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1979), when confronted with this situation the researcher consistently replied "No, please tell me. I really want to learn it from your own words/direct personal experience". This is a further reason why in this study we look to triangulate the evidence collected through ethnographic qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews) and statistical measurements (self-completion questionnaire).

#### 4.4.2.1. Semi-structured interviews' rationale

By recurring to interviews as a research method we are aware that we are not capturing direct action, but rather *self-narratives* about experiences that allow us to approach social live indirectly, through participants" understandings and perceptions. We are thus seeking to assess how people directly involved in transformative processes are through their interpretations consciously identifying or not with it (Miller & Slater, 2000).

In view of the fact that our objective it is to articulate remarks across levels of foreign correspondents' journalistic culture (Hanitzsch, 2007), this approach proved to be adequate since it consents a learning process based on correspondents' own evaluation of professional worldviews and occupational norms.

In order to fulfill this purpose we implemented a series of 43 semi-structured interviews with international news reporters based in Nairobi, Dakar and Johannesburg since they "combine the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data at the factor level" (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, p. 149). This technique "ensures that the researcher will obtain all information required (without forgetting a question), while at the same time permitting the participant freedom of responses and description to illustrate concepts" (Morse & Field, 2002, p. 76).

In this scope, interviewers are expected to "probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions" (Berg, 2001, p. 70) . This path allowed the researcher to adapt language and vocabulary to the different interviewees, staying alert to emergent meanings and associations from the answers that may not be consider in the predetermined schedule.

While "the circumstances of formal interviews tend to produce idealized answers to questions", informal verbal interaction – in this case, and more precisely, semi-informal – supports the researcher not as an authority, but rather as a committed learner: an "engaged conversationalist" (Murchison, 2010, p. 104).

Occasionally, the interviews for this study happened while informants and researcher shared a meal. Pragmatically, breakfast, lunch, coffee break and/or dinner time often proved to be the unique opportunities to meet journalists due to their often hectic daily news routines. On the other hand, this approach also allowed informants to see the researcher as "a person who can comfortably participate in 'normal' conversations" (Murchison, 2010, p. 102), and proved to be a discrete setting for those informants who were not formally allowed by their company policies to concede a "on the record" interview.

#### 4.4.2.2. Sample definition

The interview process replicated with adaptations the purposive/judgmental nonprobability framework used in the online questionnaire sampling process. Due to the time and material resources available to this study, we had to reasonably decide to exclude interviews with Pro-Ams from the fieldwork.

In order to consistently cover the three key historical hubs in professional foreign correspondence from Sub-Saharan Africa – Nairobi (Kenya), in East Africa, Dakar (Senegal), in West Africa, and Johannesburg (South Africa) in Southern Africa – we organized interviewees in function of four main criteria: 1) Business model (Profit/Non-Profit); 2) Geopolitical historical affiliation (Global North/Global South/Cosmopolitan); 3) Intended audience (International/Domestic and/or Regional); 4) Main publication platform (News agency/Newspaper/Magazine/Radio/TV/Online).

The 43 semi-structured interviews ranged in length from approximately forty minutes to over two hours and were mainly focused on life-histories, news culture, perceptions over newswork and digital media – particularly, Internet and online social media – and career expectations.

Those cover staff journalists to freelancers working for international newspapers (*Daily Telegraph, El Pais, The Guardian, The Times, Trouw, TAZ, de Volkskrant, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, La Vanguardia, The Globe and Mail*), magazines (*Time, Newsweek*), radio stations (*Capetalk Radio, RFI*), television channels (*CNBC Africa, France 24, N-24 TV, NOS, Sky News, BBC, CCTV*), news websites (*BBC News, The Christian Science Monitor, Global Post*) and news agencies (*AFP, AP, IRIN News, Reuters*). 29 news media organizations are covered. Distinct levels of experience in international news reporting are also involved: from veterans (15-20 years of work) to novices (0-5 years).

The interview schedule was composed by the following questions:

1. How did you become a foreign correspondent?
2. Can you describe me the main things you do as a foreign correspondent?
3. From the time you started in international news reporting what were the major transformations so far?
4. Right now what would you say are your main concerns and the most important issues regarding your work?

5. What do you think is the most important added value of professional foreign correspondents?
6. How does the Internet affects your work as a correspondent?
7. How do you use online social networks such as Twitter or Facebook?
8. How do you relate with citizen media and citizen journalists?
9. How do you see yourself in this job in the next 10 or 15 years?
10. Is there any other issue or question you think it's important for me to know in order to understand better your work?

This list of questions – a consistent common denominator for all interviews – was casuistically extended by researcher probes (e.g. "Can you give me real examples?", "Why do you think that works that way?").

Interviews were recorded in digital video and digital audio formats. After that they were fully transcribed. Following transcription, each interview was coded with an individual label. The coded interviews were then arranged in a systemic filling system that allowed maintenance and indexation of the coded data into coded classifications. This was a fundamental step in building an analytical system based in typologies.

Since the analysis of ethnographic data though typologies consists in a "systematic method for classifying similar events, actions, objects, people, or places, into discrete grouping" (Berg, 2001, p. 166), this approach generated the necessary selectivity regarding emergent themes and subthemes from the raw interviews.

# CHAPTER 5 – SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS IN INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORTING FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

This chapter presents the results of a survey of international news reporters working across 41 Sub-Saharan Africa countries regarding socio-demographics. Based in the answers of 124 respondents, our objective it is to answer to the following questions:

**RQ1**: Who are the international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, concerning: age, sex, years of experience in journalism, years of experience in international news reporting, years of experience in current post, main area of education, and level of education?

**RQ2**: Who are the international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, concerning: type of news organization, number of organizations they work for, function in news work, number of team members, and type of team members?

The results will be articulated with the previous findings presented in the literature review and systematically expanded through the qualitative insights collected using semi-structured interviews with 43 international news reporters based in Nairobi, Dakar and Johannesburg.

## 5.1. Age

The majority of the international news reporters who responded[24] to the questionnaire are between 33 and 42 years old (N=57; 47.51 percent). Next, we find news workers who are between 23 and 32 years old (N=30; 25 percent), 43 and 52 years old (N=19; 15.83 percent) and finally, the older with ages between 53 and 63 years (N=14; 11.66 percent). These findings are in line with data collected by previous research (Hess, 1996). When combined, youngest age classes (23-32 years old and 33-42 years old) compose 72.51 percent (N=87) of the respondents universe.

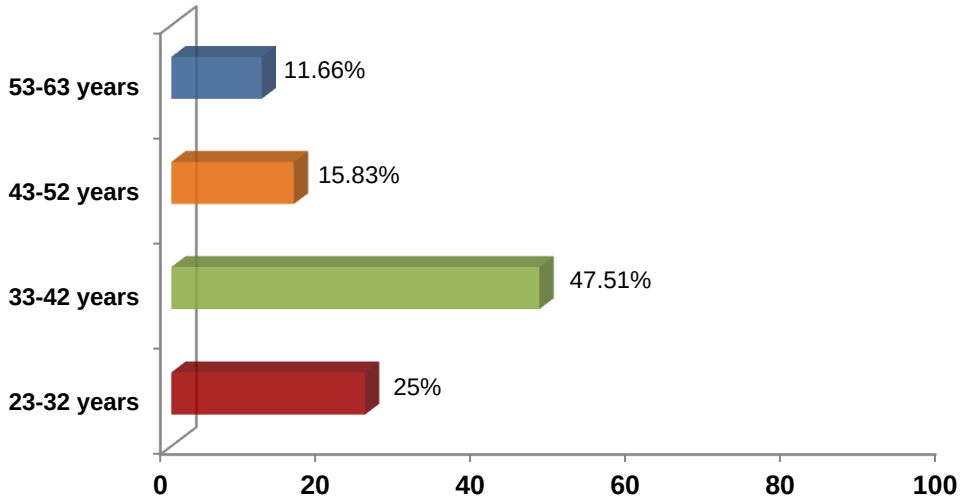


**Figure 8 - Age composition**

[24] Although response rate to this question was of 100% (N=124), we could only consider 120 valid answers (96.77%): four participants only indicated the day and/or the month they were born, not referring the year.

## 5.2. Sex

The majority of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa answering this survey were male.

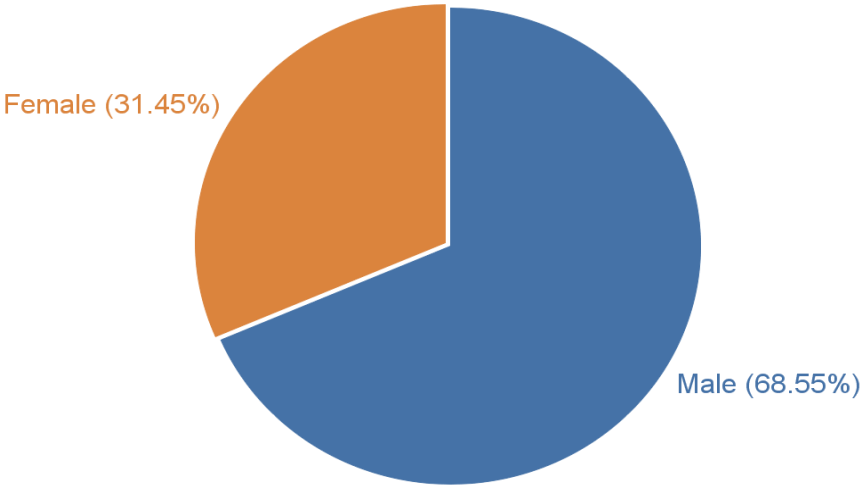


**Figure 9 - Sex composition**

This finding is consistent with traditional modern socio-demographic composition of international press corps based in other world regions. Current values are close to the ones verified almost 20 years ago (Hess, 1996). This finding suggests that the last two decades didn't reinforce a feminization of this occupation. At the same time, values show that the field has not returned to the extreme inequality of the 1960s and 1970s.

## 5.3. Years of experience in professional journalism or citizen media

In this survey we classified answers regarding years of experience in professional journalism and citizen media in three distinct categories: five years or less (beginners), six to 17 years (mid-career/experienced) and, finally, more than 18 years (veterans).

Results show that the majority of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa answering this survey have between 6 and 17 years of experience working as professional journalists or as citizen media workers (N=61; 49.19 percent), i.e. they are mostly mid-career/experienced news workers.

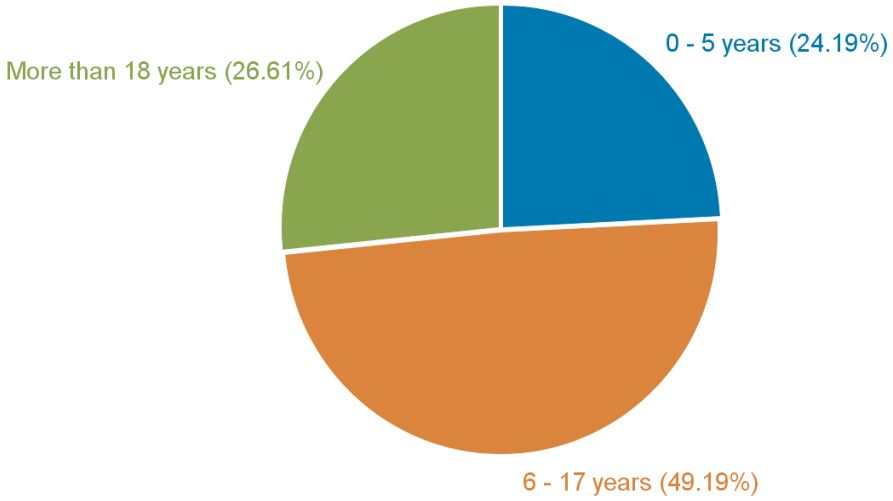


**Figure 10 - Experience in professional journalism or citizen media**

| Answer | Bar | Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 5 years | | 30 | 24.19% |
| 6 - 17 years | | 61 | 49.19% |
| More than 18 years | | 33 | 26.61% |
| Total | | 124 | 100 % |

**Table 3 - Experience in professional journalism or citizen media**

Men are prevalent in all age classes:

| Age | Male | Female | Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 5 years | 19 | 11 | 30 | 24.19% |
| 6 - 17 years | 40 | 21 | 61 | 49.19% |
| More than 18 years | 26 | 7 | 33 | 26.61% |
| Total | 85 | 39 | 124 | 100% |

**Table 4 - Experience in professional journalism or citizen media with relation to sex composition**

## 5.4. Years of experience in international news reporting

Using the same three distinct categories – five years or less (beginners), six to 17 years (mid-career/experienced) and, finally, more than 18 years (veterans) – we asked the respondents to tell us how many years they had been working specifically in the field of international news reporting.

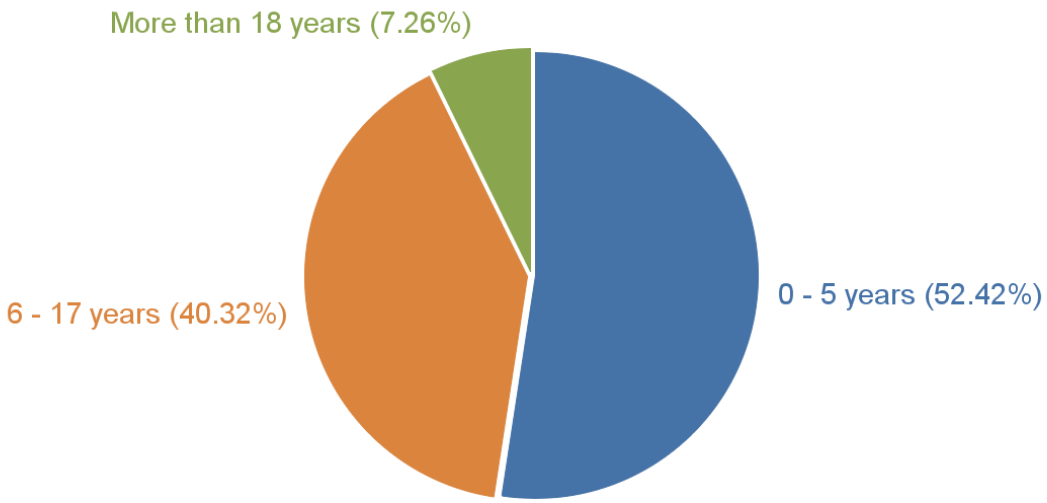


**Figure 11 - Experience in international news reporting**

Results are consistent with previous research findings (Nosaka, 1992) and show a significantly polarized field of work concerning experience in foreign correspondence.

| Answer | Bar | Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 5 years | | 65 | 52.42% |
| 6 - 17 years | | 50 | 40.32% |
| More than 18 years | | 9 | 7.26% |
| Total | | 124 | 100% |

**Table 5 - Experience in international news reporting**

Men are particularly prevalent among mid-career international news reporters:

| Age | Male | Female | Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 5 years | 39 | 26 | 65 | 52.42% |
| 6 - 17 years | 39 | 11 | 50 | 40.32% |
| More than 18 years | 7 | 2 | 9 | 7.26% |
| Total | 85 | 39 | 124 | 100% |

**Table 6 - Experience in international news reporting with relation to sex composition**

## 5.5. Years of experience in current post

Geographic mobility appears as a significant characteristic in international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa. Most respondents (N=86; 69.35 percent) have 5 or less years of experience in their current post.

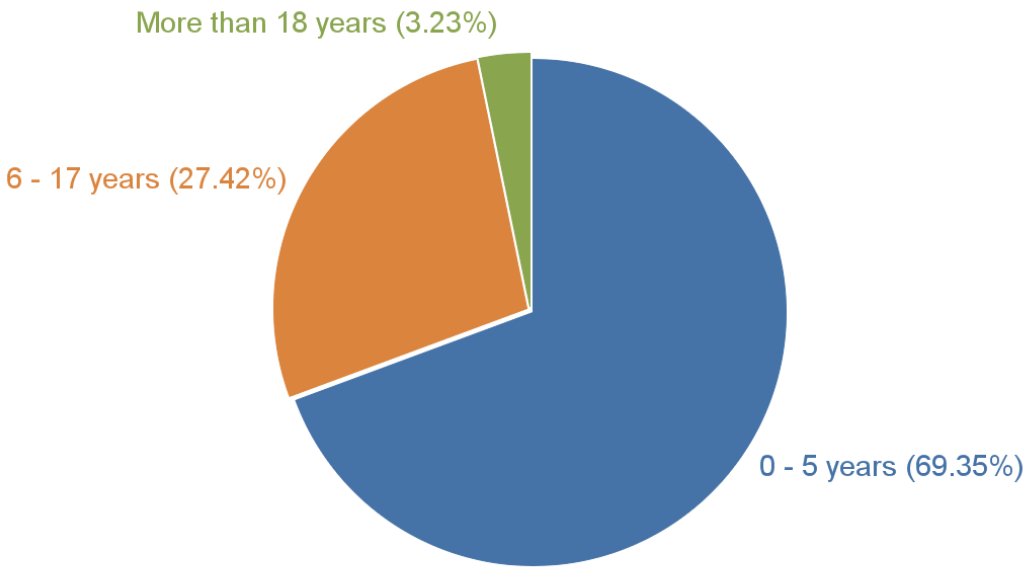


**Figure 12 - Experience in current post**

## 5.6. Main area of education

The majority of the respondents to this survey (N=85; 68.55 percent) has an educational background in the Humanities and Social Sciences field of study.

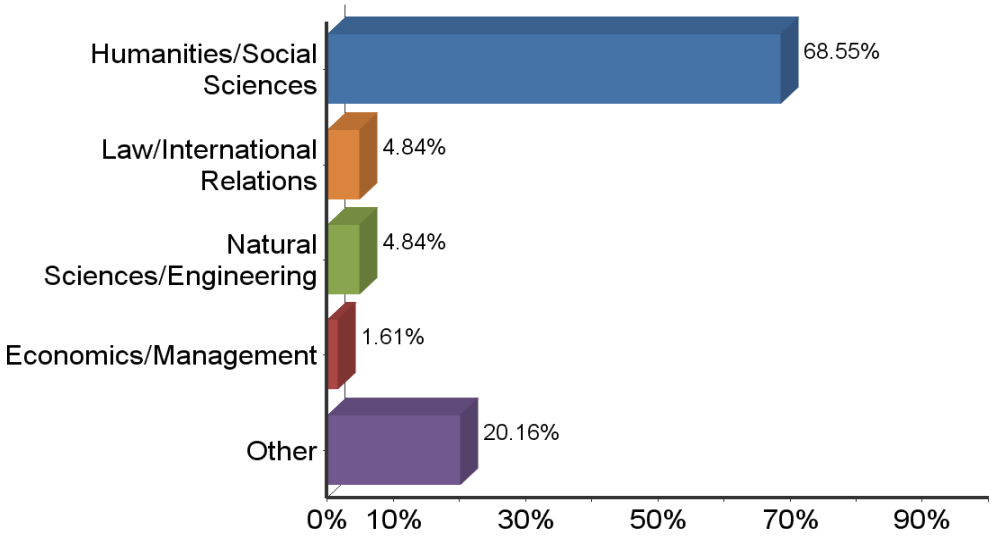


**Figure 13 - Main area of education**

Four fixed areas of education were presented to the respondents: Humanities/Social Sciences, Law/International Relations, Natural Sciences/Engineering, and Economics/Management. One open-ended option was available (Other) and was selected by 25 respondents (20.16%). Among these, 15 respondents (12.09%) specified Media, Communication or Journalism as their main area of education, followed by those whose main educational area is Linguistics (N=2; 1.61%), Technology (N=2; 1.61%), Information Systems Management (N=1; 0.81%), Political Science (N=1; 0.81%), Conflict Analysis and Resolution (N=1; 0.81%), Literature (N=1; 0.81%), Photography (N=1; 0.81%) and (several) Professional courses (N=1; 0.81%).

## 5.7. Level of education

Complementarily, the majority of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa (N=53; 42.74 percent) has a Master's degree. A Bachelor's degree is held by 33.06 percent (N=41) and a Doctorate by 1.61 percent (N=2) of the respondents.

The combined values of completed higher education degrees (Bachelor, Master and Doctorate: N=96; 77.41 percent) suggest that formal education is a very significant factor in the access to a foreign correspondence career path.

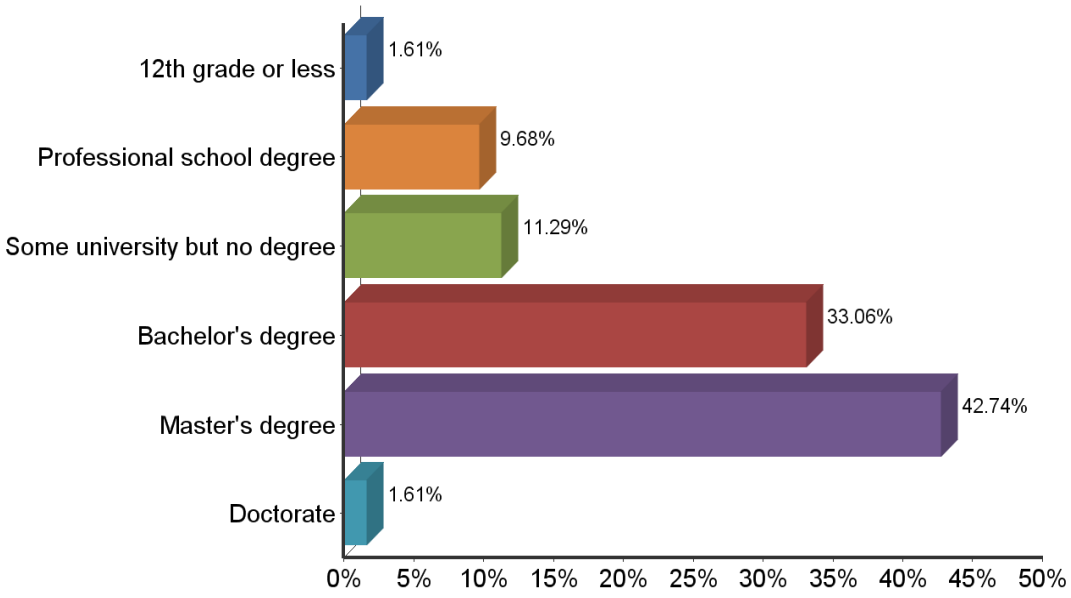


**Figure 14 - Level of education**

Men are prevalent in all educational levels. Although, a relevant finding concerns a more balanced socio-demography concerning higher education degrees, particularly the Master's degree:

| Level of Education | Male | Female | Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12th grade or less | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1.61% |
| Professional school degree | 9 | 3 | 12 | 9.68% |
| Some university but no degree | 12 | 2 | 14 | 11.29% |
| Bachelor's degree | 29 | 12 | 41 | 33.06% |
| Master's degree | 31 | 22 | 53 | 42.74% |
| Doctorate | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1.61% |
| Total | 85 | 39 | 124 | 100% |

**Table 7 - Level of education with relation to sex composition**

## 5.8. Type of news media organization

Most respondents (N=38; 30.65 percent) to this survey work for international news agencies, followed by news radio workers (N=28; 22.58 percent) and online news services (N=15; 12.10 per cent). Figure 15 organizes respondents according to the type of news media organizations they work for.

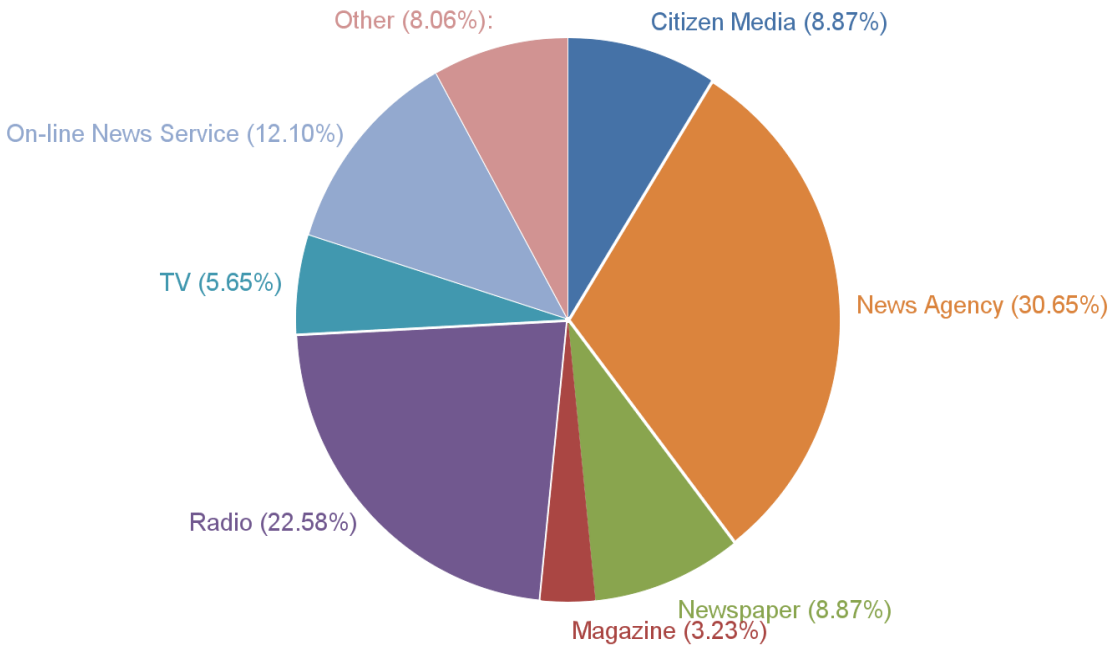


**Figure 15 - Type of news media organization**

The significant role of news agencies in international communication has been accessed in previous studies (Bielsa, 2007; Boyd-Barrett, 1980, 2000; Rantanen, 2004). The findings from our survey support the view of international news agencies as major players in contemporary international communication.

## 5.9. Number of organizations international news reporters work for

Most respondents (N=63; 50.81 percent) to this survey work for three or more news organizations.

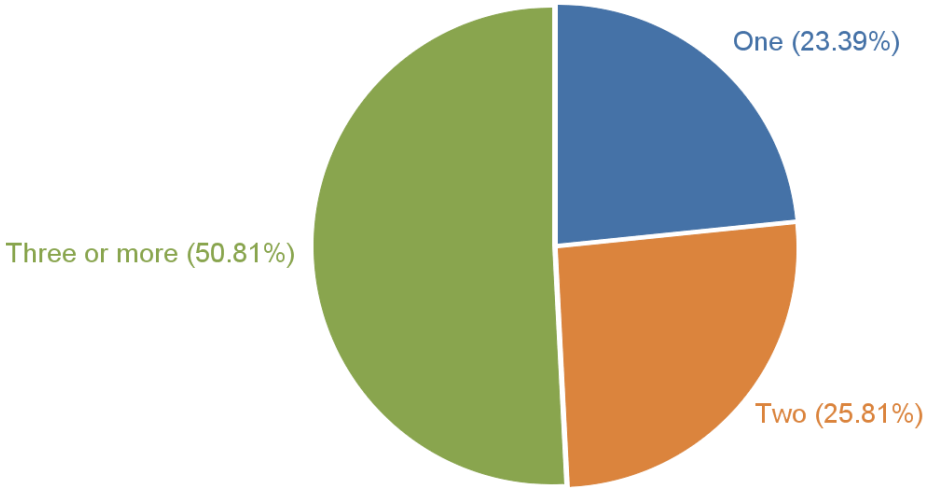


**Figure 16 - Number of organizations respondents work for**

## 5.10. Function in newswork

This finding is in consonance with performed function in news production by the participants in this study: most are freelancers (N=48; 38.71 percent) and a considerable number of respondents work as stringers (N=15; 12.10 percent).

Since stringers have been considered as a subcategory of freelancer (Polumbaum, 2009) it is critical to note that the resulting value from combining freelancers and stringers is of 63 responses (50.81 percent); precisely the number of respondents working for three or more news organizations. This suggests that a very significant portion of international news is produced by non-permanent/non-full-time workers.

Among those 48 freelancers, 25 are men (52.08%) and 23 are female (47.92%), expressing a considerably equitable sex composition.

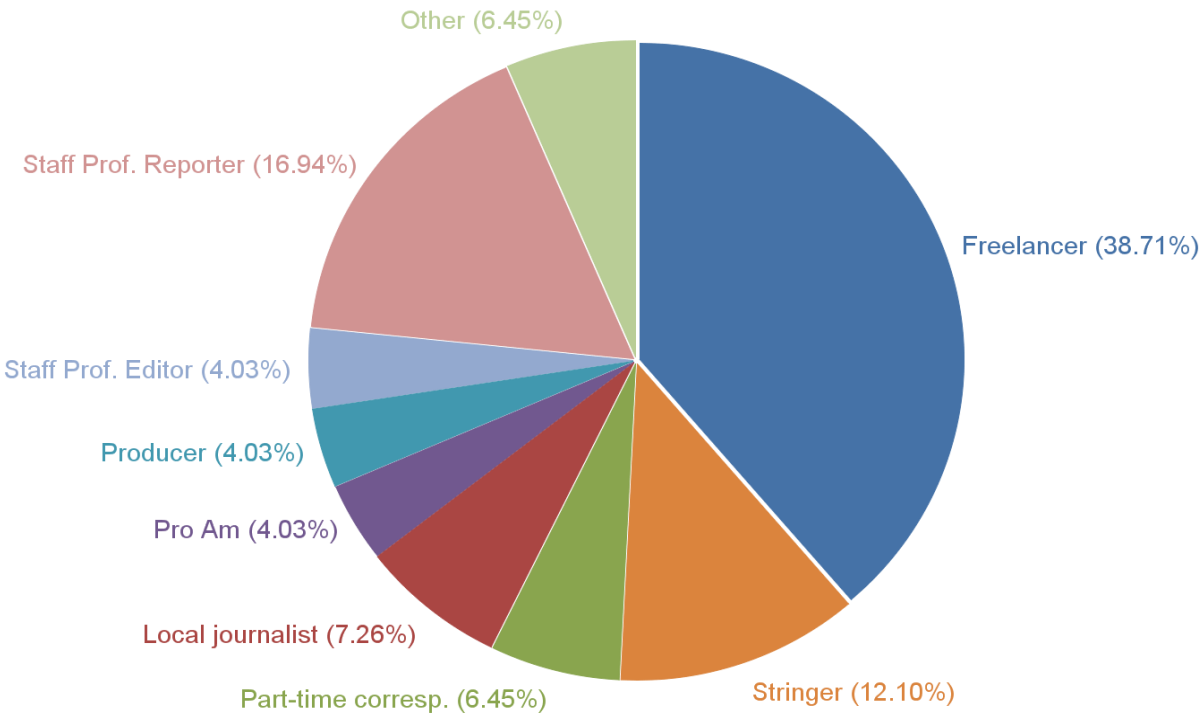


**Figure 17 - Function in newswork**

Eight respondents (6.45 %) described their function in newswork within the available "other" category: blogger (N=1; 0.81%), professional editor (N=1; 0.81%), freelance reporter (N=1; 0.81%), coordinatrice project d'appui aux medias (N=1; 0.81%), lecturer on journalism (N=1; 0.81%), editorial assistant (N=1; 0.81%), and staff photographer (N=2; 1.61%).

Considering correspondents' typology in scope, i.e. geographical mandate, contact made during the interviews identified: *national correspondents*, *regional correspondents*, *continental correspondents* (Africa) and the very fluid base of *freelancers*. Regarding geopolitical-historical affiliations, those can be *foreign* international correspondents (non-nationals) and *local* international correspondents (nationals).

## 5.11. Number of team members

Findings regarding team composition suggest a considerably polarized field of work. On the one hand, comprising a vast array of freelance individuals working alone (N=60; 48.39 percent) and, on the other, composed by bureaus/teams of four or more people (N=39; 31.45 percent).

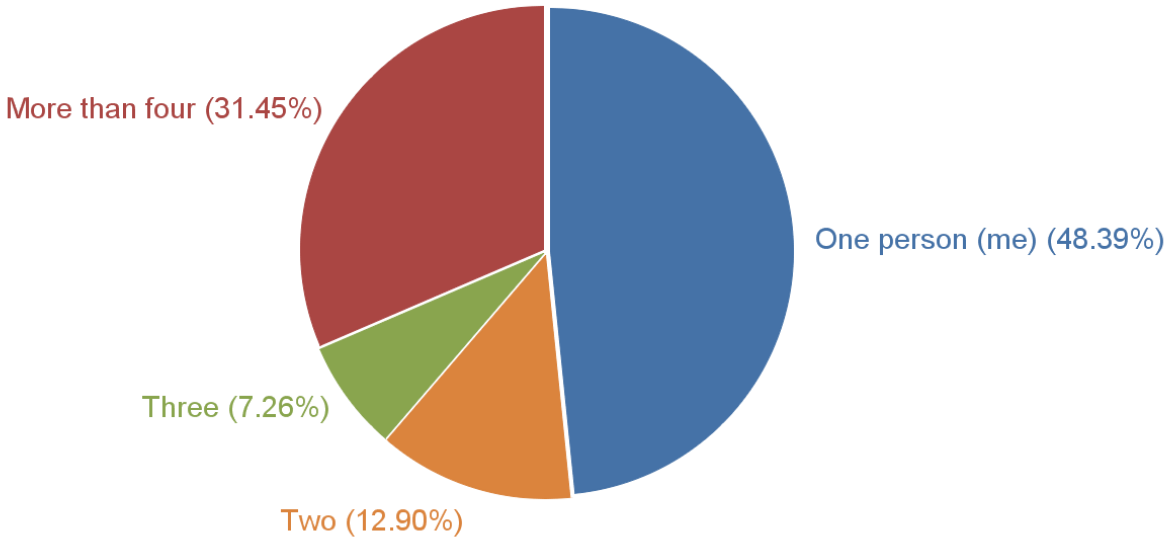


**Figure 18 - Number of team members**

## 5.12. Type of team members

Team typology determined by this study is showed in Figure 19.

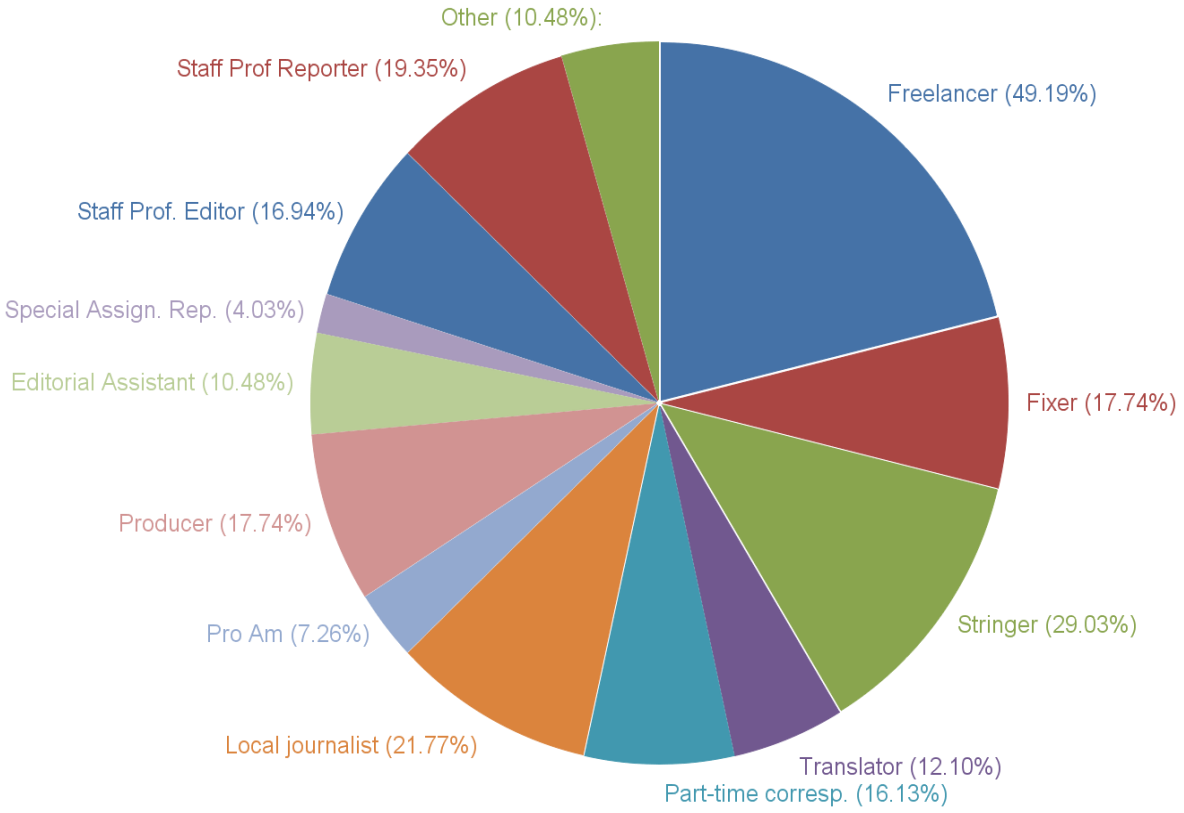


**Figure 19 - Team composition**

Thirteen respondents (10.48 %) described their team composition as containing "other" type of members: sound person (N=1; 0.81%), media trainer (N=1; 0.81%), work alone with translator (N=1; 0.81%), ngo's (N=1; 0.81%), driver (N=1; 0.81%), lecturer of radio journalism (N=1; 0.81%), writer (N=1; 0.81%), camera (N=3; 2.42%). Three respondents (2.42%) gave N/A as an answer.

# CHAPTER 6 – NEWS CULTURES IN INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORTING FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

This chapter presents the results of a survey of international news reporters working across 41 Sub-Saharan Africa countries regarding professional news culture. Based in the answers of 124 respondents, our objective it is to answer to the following questions:

**RQ3:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa value empiricism, considering original fieldwork and eyewitness?

**RQ4:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa value professionalization?

**RQ5:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive themselves as cultural translators considering: contribution to society by providing knowledge about distant realities and language fluency?

**RQ6:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive Africa's media image as being balanced considering: the overall news coverage by professional foreign correspondents and the overall coverage by Pro-Ams?

The results will be articulated with the previous findings presented in the literature review and systematically expanded through the qualitative insights collected using semi-structured interviews with 43 international news reporters based in Nairobi, Dakar and Johannesburg.

## 6.1. Empiricism: original fieldwork and eyewitness

International news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa highly value original field work and direct eye witnessing as the epistemological foundation of their newsgathering routines.

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "In order to be more accurate and reliable, international news reporting must be based on original fieldwork and direct eyewitness". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level. Results are represented in Table 8.

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In order to be more accurate and reliable, international news reporting must be based on original field work and direct eyewitness . | 1.61% | 0.81% | 4.84% | 31.45% | 61.29% | 124 |

**Table 8 - Original field work and direct eyewitness**

The majority of the respondents to this survey (N=76; 61.29 percent) strongly agrees with the referred sentence, followed by 39 participants (31.45 percent) who agree with it. The combined value of agreement (N=115; 92.74 percent) suggest that empiricism is a structuring inherent value in international news reporting culture from Sub-Saharan Africa. This finding is reinforced by the insights expressed in the interviews.

Since this thesis addresses particularly the epistemological dimension of news workers' culture – objectivism and empiricism – a preliminary question arises: *Why do news workers aspire to a career path in international news reporting?* This interrogation is an equivalent to asking what their values, attitudes, and beliefs were when news workers decided to devote their activity to foreign correspondence, i.e. their life stories and self-projections.

*Travel and living abroad* emerge as clear constituents of international news reporting culture. From an organizational prism, over the years the pursuit of empirically-based reports was objectified though the establishment of overseas bureaus in Sub-Saharan African, keeping journalists on the ground. Historically, the considerable regional concentration of these bureaus translated into foreign correspondence *hubs*. That's why "Nairobi is a media hub, a gateway to Africa", says Alice Klein, a freelancer journalist

working in Kenya, and also why in Samba Badji (BBC) terms "Dakar is a kind of hub for the sub-region".

From an individual perspective, a deep myth-making process, i.e. a system of consciousness that profoundly affects the day-to-day practice of journalism (Hallin, 1986, p. 23) structures travel and living abroad as two common *personal reasons* to one become a correspondent in Sub-Saharan Africa:

> *To be honest, the most important ones are selfish: it's me. I like to experience these things. I was born in Spain. Everybody speaks Spanish, everybody look the same, and everybody talks about the same things. Uff! So, I like to go to different places, new worlds to discover, to conquer. When you get to a new place there's challenges, things to do. Honestly, this is the most important reason, the one that moved me to come here.* (Excerpt from interview with José Miguel Calatayud, a freelancer correspondent for El País, based in Nairobi)

> *Living in a foreign country. I like it. I don't want to live in my own country. I would be afraid to be bored. What I really like is… for instance, the first time I went to Chad, we travelled a lot by car. I had all this landscape at my window and thinking «I'm doing something because I'm going somewhere, I'm not really here». Like, if I'm dreaming about things, looking to the landscape. It's really a gift to be able to do that. And I still do the same when I'm travelling. Even when I'm worried about the story and I want it to be ok, or even when I'm concerned editing it, tired, I'm still thinking «Fuck, this is really good».* (Excerpt from interview with Stéphanie Braquehais, a freelancer correspondent for RFI and France 24, based in Nairobi)

But besides these reasons tending to individual experience enhancement, other correspondents also express a more community-oriented and idealized sense of *mission* or *personal duty:*

> *For a young age I was reading books from correspondents reporting from Africa, the Rwanda genocide (…) It was more a duty than a desire. It was like: this stuff is going on and people don't really talk about it and we need keep exposing these things and bring people accountable. I felt this… kind of a mission and this feeling of… you know something about which something must be done.* (Excerpt from interview with Alice Klein, a freelancer journalism working in Kenya)

> *The life style is amazing and you do get to cover incredible places. I mean… the stuff I've see while living in Asmara for a year and a half, you know, covering pretty crazy stuff. I love human rights issues, there was fear then that the war was going to start again. So, it gets quite addictive and you get that kind of feeling quite important, that sense of people are relying on you. (…) In South Sudan I've come to cover quite historical events, the first elections in many years, the referendum.* (Excerpt from interview with M., a staff correspondent for a major international news agency)

As important as to recognize this structural individual predisposition to travelling and living abroad it is to note the clear existing link between it and the epistemological culture (empiricism) of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, operationalized through original fieldwork and direct eyewitness.

For some news workers, traveling was actually a way to enter in international news reporting career path. This was the case of Alan Boswell, the McClatchy newspapers' correspondent based in Nairobi, who not only "studied [in Nairobi] as a study-abroad program and ended up staying for an entire year" as from there he "met some bureau chiefs here in Nairobi before I got back to school. After I graduated, I move back to start freelancing".

Observation, evidence and direct experience emerge as basilar foundations for truth claim within international news reporting culture among news workers based in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this sense, "travelling is in a certain way a routine", says Kees Broere, De Volskrant correspondent based in Nairoibi. "You come back from a trip and after a week you think «Ok. What's next?». But that doesn't mean that you don't spend time working from Nairobi, I mean… I think probably I travelled 5 months and so that it still means that I've been here in Kenya for 7 months".

Rather than a subsidiary task, travel and logistic constraints *are* international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa:

> *You get to a place, it may not have roads or there's no safe way of doing it rather than renting a car for $400 a day and have an escort. I'm working on a trip to Central African Republic, to the East, where the LRA is operating. Figuring these things out logistically is a big part of the job. I think there's few places in the world where this would be the same. And it is a big part of the job. The writing and the reporting in Africa is definitely only a portion of the broad reporting.* (Excerpt from interview with Alan Boswell, McClatchy newspapers' correspondent based in Nairobi)

*We are now able to broadcast from deep in the bush using satellite dishes. Sometimes you would even like the newsroom to let you be a little freer. Also, if you're relying in satellites, you're relying in batteries, so relying in [electrical] power. So, it's an entire chain of things to take into account when thinking reporting the continent.* (Excerpt from interview with Thomas Fessy, BBC correspondent based in Dakar)

*Africa can be tough, frustrating, and difficult. You need to be a little an adventurous cowboy. I mean: if you are going to stick to rules that come from Europe or America, well, you just have to adjust. (…) It's the best job in the world. Who else gets to be in the front row seat of bad things, good things*? (Excerpt from interview with Ilona Eveleens, correspondent for TROUW, TAZ and N-24 based in Nairobi)

This direct, even if fluid, often unpredicted and occasional role as privileged observers ("adventurous cowboys") in the "front row seat" of History, positions eyewitness – and thus empiricism – in the heart of news culture among foreign correspondents. "You can't fully understand a context just by reading books or by reading articles", states Laura Heaton, a freelancer journalist in Kenya. "You need to be there and you need to be making connections with the people you are writing about."

This safeguarding of "context" and of "making connections with the people" is commonly referred by the news reporters as being foundational to their activity:

*Nothing can replace someone on the ground who is able to meet people and to feel the atmosphere, that's how the information is coming it is not about picking the phone, calling someone that will tell you if the answer is yes or no. It's also about feeling things and seeing things.* (Excerpt from interview with Stéphanie Braquehais, a freelancer correspondent for RFI and France 24, based in Nairobi)

*In order to explain something that has a human nature you have to be there, it's necessary. It's a matter of respect to get this time and sensibility. Living here and be able to travel allows you to open your eyes and get to understand better the continent.* (Excerpt from interview with Xavier Aldekoa, a freelancer correspondent for La Vanguardia, based in Johannesburg)

*In Mali, lot of people missed the reaction of the local population to the coup because there was a really strong popular support for the coup, but most of the international news outlets missed that because they're not there. The local journalists were there, they could see it. You could see the taking of the national television and people were clapping and supporting the coup. UN was condemning the coup but actually lots of Malians were very happy. But when you're writing from abroad, you don't see it. But if you're there you see*

*it's not black and white.* (Excerpt from interview with David Lewis, staff correspondent for Reuters, based in Dakar)

Although foreign correspondents strongly underline the importance of 'being there' (empiricism), they also recognize that despite its prescriptive strength, nowadays they often find themselves unable to honor that cultural commitment:

*It's crucial that we are able to travel there. Fact is: we don't anymore. It's much important that we should, but we don't. (…) I'm no longer travelling for work. What you then rely is the wires mostly, if I'm honest with you. Because that is the kind of social feed, like Twitter, but from people in which you trust.* (Excerpt from interview with P., a long-standing newspaper correspondent)

*In order to understand the story you have to be there. One of my focuses here is to cover Somalia. We have a tight policy when it comes to go to Mogadishu. And it's a nightmare! How am I supposed to understand Mogadishu without being able to go there? I don't know what the place looks like. I don't know the people. I can't even mentally draw the city outlines. If I did, even not being there, if a blast goes on I could write a more colorful piece.* (Excerpt from interview with L., a staff journalist working for a major international news agency)

Moreover, this epistemological culture based in empiricism is currently being transformed by the use of digital technologies in international news reporting:

*Much of what I'm writing it's not taking place in the country in which I am. For example, I covered all the Ivory Coast conflict from Senegal. And I don't think that would be possible two or three years ago. You know… everybody has an email, Twitter, a cell phone. I can see what's happening in real time, really fast. I had colleagues who were there and they got stuck in hotels because of the war, they couldn't leave and the hotel had no power, so they couldn't do anything. They could call the numbers in their phone and that's it. For me, here, I could report.* (Excerpt from interview with Drew Hinshaw, a freelancer correspondent for Wall Street Journal, based in Dakar)

This emergent trend composes what can described as *digitally networked seated journalism*, underlined by the use of Internet across mobile devices and translated in newsgathering procedures that exclude or make residual original field or/and direct eye witnessing, i.e. empiricism. As we shall later analyze in greater detail, emailing sources, data mining, news web clipping and the use of online social networks are particularly relevant in the scope of this emergent *digitally networked seated newsgathering.*

## 6.2. Professionalization as boundary-work

Occupations claim and compete for jurisdiction over work areas, mostly based in its cognitive structure and exclusive rights. Journalism is no exception, with practitioners attributing themselves selected characteristics from where selected privileges are derived (boundary work).

For this thesis we surveyed international news reporters on the subjective definitions of their occupation, asking them in the interview process "What do you think is the most important added value of professional foreign correspondents?". The findings are illustrated in Figure 20.

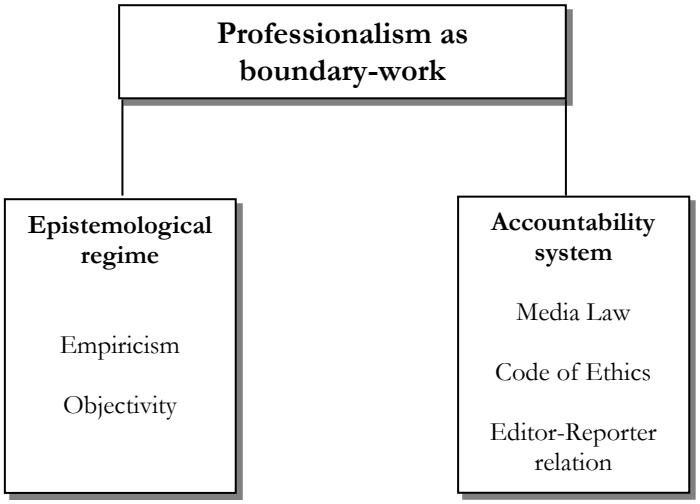


**Figure 20 - Professionalism as boundary-work**

*Professionalism* emerges as an umbrella argument for boundary-work within journalists' culture. From it a vindication of exclusive occupational rights is derived, often articulated as the result of a specific educational and/or training process towards particular quality standards – essentially, cognitive – determined by prescriptive methods or procedures, and regulated by an accountability system.

The reasoning is articulated as: *Our education and training validates our values and methods* (professionalism). *These guarantee the exclusive quality of our stock of knowledge* (epistemology: empiricism and objectivity). *A quality control system is in place* (accountability). *The exclusive*

*quality of our cognitive culture shall be socially distinguished and protected from other activities* (boundary-work):

> *I'm a professional. I've studied and I have been trained to do this. I'm supposed to stick to some professional principles.* (Excerpt from interview with José Miguel Calatayud, a freelancer correspondent for El País, based in Nairobi)

> *As journalists we were trained to not even assume that your name spells like that, but to check. Even if you're having a telephone interview you have to ask the person to spell his name.* (Excerpt from interview with N., a television journalist)

> *[It's] the difference between a guy in Somalia with a mobile phone, passing information for a wider readership and a guy in Nairobi using his sources, phoning them to check them, and then sending the information on. So, it's verification, it's experience, it's legal training, it's access.* (Excerpt from interview with P., a long-standing newspaper correspondent)

Professionalism is then noted in foreign correspondents' self-narratives as a crucial point between who is – and, normatively, shall be kept – within or outside the profession's boundary. Its benefits are expressed in terms of *consistency:*

> *[The most important added-value is] consistency. With no dedicated [permanent professional] correspondent in a region, news outlets have to rely on whatever freelancers, if any, might be roaming through - who may not know the company's model and who will probably not be around to profit from the experience by the time the next story hits.* (Excerpt from interview with Nick Loomis., a freelancer correspondent based in Dakar)

> *The main interest in having a correspondent is that you can fit the news to your public. As an example, there would be a risk for [my news media] to leave its local correspondent and just rely on what international news agencies publish. These agencies are working for general media, they are not working for the African public; we are working for the French speaking African public. So, we need to have our coverage of what is going on.* (Excerpt from interview with Laurent Correau., correspondent for RFI, based in Dakar)

Professionalism is also interpreted as *disambiguation*, as expressed by the Dakar-based staff journalist David Lewis, correspondent for Reuters: "I happened to be in Mali when the coup was happening. That made much easier to the bureau to know exactly what we need to be covering".

This view is also shared by Anita Powell, correspondent for The Associated Press in Johannesburg: "I think it is important [to keep a full-time professional foreign correspondent] because you get unexpected interesting stories when you pick someone who is dedicated." A perception underlined by David Smith, working for British newspaper *The Guardian*, and also based in South Africa: "To have [professional] foreign correspondents now it's more essential than never, because with all this global noise, there's the risk of just having people seated at desks, constantly filtering websites, Twitter feeds, and piecing a story together".

A first expression of professionalism as boundary-work refers to the *epistemological regime* of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa and is articulated in terms of *empiricism*:

> *The most fundamental part in journalist is that you have to be there yourself and be able to interpret things yourself. That's you're expected to do as a news agency: «We were there, we saw it». You need to have your people there.* (Excerpt from interview with Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters' correspondent based in Dakar)

> *It's deeply important to have people on the ground. The roots of journalism is report what you see and I do hope we can protect that as long as we can.* (Excerpt from interview with Thomas Fessy, BBC correspondent based in Dakar)

> *The journalist who is in the place and says «I'm seeing this»: it's an added value. It's credibility.* (Excerpt from interview with Xavier Aldekoa, correspondent for La Vanguardia, based in Johannesburg)

> *We are on the ground, we go to the places where things are happening, we duck for cover when there's a fire fight, we try to talk down to soldiers who point down guns at us, we see for ourselves. We do the reading ourselves, we do the phone calls ourselves. I do vast amount of reading for my job, I travel a great deal, exhaustingly all over West and Central Africa. I'm there. You cannot do proper foreign correspondence unless there is money to pay for it. It costs money. Of course, writing a blog is cheap, but the results are cheap too and they have nothing to do with journalism.* (Excerpt from interview with Adam Nossiter, correspondent for The New York Times, based in Dakar)

As notoriously expressed by Sophie Ribstein, RFI correspondent in South Africa, and Malick Ba, a journalist working for Agence France Press in Senegal, empiricism is particularly valued for enabling direct *fact-checcking* and *development of expertise*:

> *You can cover Marikana from Paris, but you won't be meeting the miners and be able to check what is going on when they say «Hey we are earning 4.000 Rands and we want 12.000». Who is going to go to their shack and check their payslip? (…) you can develop expertise in the region and keep in a local in situations that are different.*

> *It allows us a deeper understanding, particularly if you go there often. My first time in Guinea-Bissau was very difficult, because the situation [civil war] and because of the language, Portuguese, for local contacts. Since then, I go there often, I know people, I know the city better, I can go by myself. If we use just the telephone we don't have the means to check all the information.*

Within international news reporters' epistemological regime, empiricism is translated into characteristic *storytelling and narrative conventions*:

> *It's contacts, context, the color, the way to describe things.* (Excerpt from interview with Fran Blandy, correspondent for Agence France Press, based in Dakar)

> *Foreign correspondence is different from being a journalist in your home country: You are two quarters reporter and one quarter columnist or analyst. You have to take what is going on and report it but also translate it and tell your readers why it's interesting and sometimes even imply who the good guy or the bad guy is. There's much more room for subjectivity within foreign correspondence reporting. Because you are in some ways actually a translator and that implies some subjectivity. Your readers don't know the subject very well or at all.* (Excerpt from interview with Alan Boswell, correspondent for McClatchy Newspapers based in Nairobi)

> *You're a storyteller, it doesn't matter how much breaking news it is or what it is. The basic decision you're making is «this is what this means (…) Telling stories is a human trade, citizen journalists can do it, but it is our job. (*Excerpt from interview with Drew Hinshaw, correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, based in Dakar)

Critically, it must be noted that in foreign correspondents' culture that *implicated subjectivity* is permanently regulated by *objectivity* as an epistemological principle: "We are independent providers of information. We bring objectivity", says Felix Bate, Reuters correspondent in Dakar. Although, as we shall see soon when observing the cross-cultural context of international news reporting, while used as a mean by which a truth claim is justified as *detachment* – "the observer and the observed are seen as two distinct categories" (Hanitzch, 2007, p. 376) – reporters' objectivity is permanently challenged by their own task of *cultural immersion*.

A second expression of professionalism as boundary-work arises from international news reporters' perceptions on an *accountability system* in place, designed to assure the *quality of their stock of knowledge*. These control mechanisms were objectified by the surveyed international news reporters' as *media laws,* their occupational *code of ethics* and the organizational *editor-reporter relation:*

> *I'm confined by the law and regulations of the media.* (Excerpt from interview with Ruth Nesoba, correspondent for BBC News, based in Nairobi)

> *That's not why professional journalism came about? Give people information in a certain way? Of course, some people don't believe a word that we say, but I do like to think those professional standards, ethics, media law and all those kind of things a very important role.* (Excerpt from interview with Fran Blandy, correspondent for Agence France Press, based in Dakar)

> *I never think to myself «Oh this is interesting» and just write it. It always goes to the desk. They are arbiters, aware of what else is happening in the world. If it's a particular bleak day, with lots of war and killing, and misery there may be a story from about South African fashion week or an art exhibition that has opened. They're constantly gauging a balance. Sometimes they call me and ask «Can we do this?» or «Can we do that?». They have that global perspective. So sometimes they can see from afar what I can't see from here.* (Excerpt from interview with David Smith, correspondent for The Guardian, based in Johannesburg)

> *You are on the ground, trying to do it and then you have also an editor back in the US who is also doing it for even a broader perspective and I think that editor relationship is incredibly important for the news, having that person who sees what you are producing and helps you direct the story or even tells you what to do.* (Excerpt from interview with Alan Boswell, McClatchy newspapers' correspondent based in Nairobi)

*Having editors [who spent their career as reporters or are still reporters] it's a huge difference. This is a team work. So, you have to understand mutually. If he understands what you are doing, you also must understand that they have to make a newspaper and need information. If you're covering breaking news stories, there's a pressure that not comes from the editors, but from the job itself.* (Excerpt from interview with Xavier Aldekoa, a freelancer correspondent for La Vanguardia, based in Johannesburg)

## 6.3. Framing citizen media: professionalism and innovation in news culture

The combination of technology, particularly the Internet and its graphic interface, the World Wide Web, and the emergence of *nonconventional journalists* are transforming long-held meanings and also the implications of eye witnessing as a journalistic keyword (Zelizer, 2007). How do *professional witnesses of history* position themselves in this transforming communicative environment? How do they interpret their own occupational sphere with relation to the rising actors in the transnational mediasphere? How do they frame citizen media workers?

Two conflicting trends emerge within these dynamics of repositioning, i.e. these "strategies for surviving or succeeding in these new flows and spaces" (Miller and Slater, 2000, p. 20) that characterize the network society (Castells 1999, 2000, 2007, 2011).

The first, *occupational protectionism* based in *professionalism as boundary-work*. In this scope, more *preservationist* international news reporters firmly stick to their *epistemological regime* and *accountability system* as arguments for safeguard modern news culture. It has been recently described as a professional journalists' attempt to demarcate what they do from what citizen do (Andén-Papadopoulos & Pantti, 2013).

For these professional journalists, *empiricism* and *objectivity* works as exclusionary criteria. "The key thing on citizen journalists is: Was he or she there?" says T., a freelancer online news media correspondent. "If he or she was, then tell me what you saw. Don't tell me what you think it means or how you think it happened. Just tell me what you saw with your own eyes. There's when it's useful."

For T. "there is an absolute gaping gulf of difference between a citizen journalist, blogger, whatever you want to call it… and a professional journalist", he argues. "We've been trained to sourcing, where is it coming from? Be objective, you're not writing an opinion piece, you're reporting what happened. Be balanced. Just all these old basic things that most people aren't trained and aren't interested in."

Objective journalism is as such considered a distinct occupational culture in itself: "Bloggers often have an opinion, when in journalism you're trying to bring something balanced", states Ilona Eveleens, correspondent for TROUW, TAZ and N-24 based in Nairobi. "Even if you have your own opinion you try to keep it out of it. So, it's a different level".

These practitioners explicitly perceive their professionalism as a safeguard for public information reliability. "People know that when they turn to us, they can have a

certain kind of trust in what we do, because we are careful, we do it ourselves, we do insist in being on the ground ourselves when we can.", argues Adam Nossiter, The New York Times' correspondent based in Dakar. "I know that now it is easier for you to publish yourself, but there's a vast difference between simply writing a blog and actually doing a business of journalism and foreign correspondence. The two worlds have nothing to do with each other."

From the perspective of occupational protectionists "What citizen journalism also highlights is that journalism is a proper job and it shouldn't be forgotten." says Thomas Fessy, BBC correspondent based in Dakar. "I think we need to fight for that proper journalists are on the ground, because it's a proper job and it need to be taken seriously. Especially in these times of fast-paced information, it goes so quickly that people need professionals to give them directions and to sort this information."

As Samba Badji, BBC's correspondent in Dakar, summarizes:

> *It's not the same way of covering stories. In citizen journalism, there is a part of self-implication or they are directly involving themselves in how they cover stories. Traditionally, we would cover only the story and the audience would decide. Objectivity, independence, detachment. Of course I'm not saying that these exist all the time in traditional media, but it's one of the principles of this job. If you are a citizen journalist it's not very important. It's another way of seeing and covering stories. They are not just consumers of information, but also actors of information.*

To this epistemological regime joins an *accountability system* estimated as an occupational surveillance mechanism in which protectionists tend to rely as a guarantee for the quality of their stock of knowledge.

Based on this an argument is built around "professional observers", in Katherine Houreld's terms. For the Nairobi-based The Associated Press correspondent, "The problem with citizen journalists is that there are no consequences for false reporting. If I report something that is wrong I get fired. If citizen journalists report something that is wrong, so what? That's why there's no substitute for professional observers."

This same argument is shared by Ruth Nesoba, working for the BBC in Kenya: "They are not professionals, so they break so many rules and sometimes there's the risk of defaming people. They are faceless people. We don't know who they are. So, they can get away with that very easily. I can't get away with that very easily".

In sum, "If I am caught breaking those [professional principles]", resumes José Miguel Calatayud, a freelancer correspondent for El País, based in Nairobi, "I can be

kicked out. Otherwise, some citizen journalist who blogs, who happens to be in one place and capture something with a phone: it´s information, it´s the same raw material that I work with, but it's not a product in the same way […] in the sense they are less accountable. They are just offering more raw materials."

This protectionist dynamic towards repositioning in international news reporting lives in tension with a more flexible and liberal interpretation of journalism culture. The latter is expressed, even if sometimes in an ambiguous way, towards an *occupational boundary-opening.*

News innovators among foreign correspondents tend to regard journalism less as a proprietary occupation and more as an open-source practice to be shared, recognizing participation as a renewed normative principle:

> *I have mixed feelings on this because I am a real advocate for citizen journalism from the countries they are writing about. And it's really patronizing Western media send their reporters parachuting to other countries and expect them to have the best reports. It's so nonsensical because you have this people incredibly knowledgeable, they live in the country, they know all the contacts, but they are kind of not trusted I guess, so they are often used as fixers, but actually I think they must be integrated more.* (Excerpt from interview with Alice Klein, a freelance journalist working in Kenya)

> *If there's someone who's not a journalist but it's in a place where news is happening, you have to be cautious and not start repeating what those people are saying and post information that it's not accurate. But it can be really amazing to have people that are in all these different countries. For instance, there was a building collapse in Accra, Ghana a few weeks ago. A shopping center collapsed. It was amazing the number of people from Ghana that were tweeting and putting videos online. What I ended up doing was pull it together in Storify, comments and what people was talking about, linking to videos and all of that. So, I think it's a different type of way of presenting a story, rather than write a news piece, assembling and curating what people are talking about.* (Excerpt from interview with Erin Conway-Smith, correspondent for Global Post, based in Johannesburg)

> *It took a long time for newspapers to shift from quite old-fashioned, antiquated ideas like to read today's news you have to buy a big and thick paper tomorrow by 9 o´clock in the morning. It's crazy. What forced that change, that modernization was the beginning of what I guess we now call social journalism, citizen journalism, hobby journalism, I don't know, whatever you call it.* (Excerpt from interview with P., a long-standing newspaper correspondent)

This perception towards a *more open integration of citizen media* as an emerging distinct actor in international news reporting is particularly articulated around the social benefit from a *more participated and balanced international news flow of information*.

"Citizen journalism? I think it's good in terms of information circulation", says Stéphanie Braquehais, RFI and France 24 correspondent, based in Nairobi. Guy Henderson, CCTV's correspondent in Johannesburg agrees: "As long there is more information out there, the better for us. And I think that there will always be professional institutions that will channel information, whether it's a news channel or a newspaper."

Even if "there's no way that foreign correspondents can be completely replaced", says Geoffrey York, The Global and Mail correspondent in Johannesburg, these *occupational boundary-openers* explicit recognize that "of course the balance is shifting and that's probably good. I hope there will always be a role for the outside observer who comes in and have an outside perspective, but also is knowledgeable as possible. There's nothing inherited to a citizen that makes him better than a foreign correspondent, just as vice-versa."

In this sense, a clear functional repositioning of the international news reporter role appears to be assumed by the practitioners themselves. "I think it does change the role of foreign correspondents a bit into actually potentially being a little more just scene reporting", underlines Eve Fairbanks, a freelancer correspondent based in South Africa. "In the past you would go and interview those academics in their offices. You would give a quote to them, which is kind of a power. Now they're reaching the public themselves. For you just to repackage this stuff… it has no purpose anymore".

Even if a repositioning of the journalistic field is considerably attributed to a shift at its material basis (digitization), a common view is shared both by *news culture protectionists* and *news culture liberals*: the rejection of technological determinism, i.e. the access and use of technology as exclusive criteria to define who international news reporters are. This finding is critical when regarding the work of international photographers and videographers, who "find it particularly annoying so many people using mobile phones and do so many videos and pictures", says Alice, a freelancer journalism working in Kenya:

> *Now, anyone who has an iPhone can take photos. That's a difficult thing because anywhere there's a story there's people with phones. In a sense you're not competing with other photographers, you're competing with amateurs who have taken a photo. Not all publications are interested in quality; they just want something to show what happened. In that way is quite hard for photographers. Now, there's so much people taking*

*photos – which is fine – but it's not necessarily quality. Before every publication had a photographer, now journalists take the photo. You'll do everything: shoot video, do the stills, etc. So, it is really sidelining photography.* (Excerpt from interview with Mariella Furrer, a freelancer photojournalist and documentary photographer based in Johannesburg)

*The fact that many people now have access to different media, you know TV, You Tube, you name it… it's a wonderful thing and greatly enhanced my work, but I still believe there's still space for the sometimes called this filter of professional journalists (…) And this is not arrogant: If I would be able to buy all the tools that a surgeon uses in the field of operations, still I would never call myself a surgeon.* (Excerpt from interview with Kees Boere, De Volskrant correspondent based in Nairoibi)

*Journalism is my profession. I studied it, practice it for fifteen years. I don't think that tomorrow someone coming here with its iPhone will be doing the same job as I'm doing it. There is a room for this kind of non-professional media, but there will always be a difference between these non-professionals and what professional journalists can produce.* (Excerpt from interview with Laurent Correau, correspondent for RFI, based in Dakar)

The emergence of two distinctive professional sub-cultures regarding citizen media role within international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa – *occupational protectionism* and *occupational boundary-opening* – as two distinct attitudes towards the ongoing repositioning within international journalism is unified by the overall understanding of *citizen media as a complementary culture* and not as a strict opposing force struggling against professional news reporters:

*I don't think they are taking over the role of traditional journalists. Traditional journalists and citizen journalists must see this move as an opportunity of complementary in the way of doing things.* (Excerpt from interview with Samba Badji, BBC correspondent based in Dakar)

*I don't see it as a competition. I think traditional journalists could use bloggers and vice-versa maybe. I'm sure bloggers read newspapers. I don't see it as a competition, it's a different way*. (Excerpt from interview with Alice Klein, a freelancer journalism working in Kenya)

*I think it will be a role for people to break news in Twitter and stuff like that, but if people think that's what journalism is… And who knows, that can be the way journalism is going, but that would be a*

*completely different product of what is now being produced.* (Excerpt from interview with Alan Boswell, McClatchy newspapers' correspondent based in Nairobi)

*If you look at Syria or Libya most of the images were captured by cellphones. You have all these activists or fighter-activists pouring all this content. In a place like Syria it's difficult and dangerous to a foreign media to get in. Of course we still need an independent journalist to get in and get unbiased reporting and filter through propaganda. In terms of volume that is flowing now directly from the source, I don't see it as a problem or a threat, because there is a distinct difference between what a citizen journalist will be able to photograph with their mobile phone or even a decent camera compared to a trained photojournalist. They will always be there in places where we can't be on time, but keeping things in context is what professional journalism is about. It's the difference between a player and an observer* (Excerpt from interview with Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters' correspondent based in Dakar)

Findings suggest that a sector of professional journalists perceive this complementarity in *exclusivist terms,* i.e. Pro-Ams shall not be considered for integration in professional journalism, while a different segment perceives it in *inclusive terms*, towards a more participative culture, as illustrated in Figure 21.

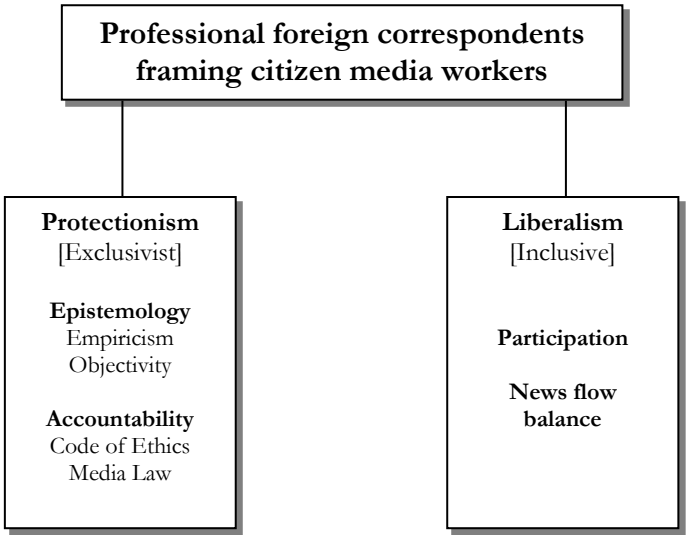


**Figure 21 - Professional foreign correspondents framing citizen media workers**

## 6.4. Cultural translation: contribution to society and language fluency

International news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa consider themselves cultural translators and clearly regard their newswork as a relevant contribution to society by providing knowledge about distant realities.

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "Throughout my work, I make a contribution to society by providing knowledge about distant realities". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level. Results are represented in Figure 22.

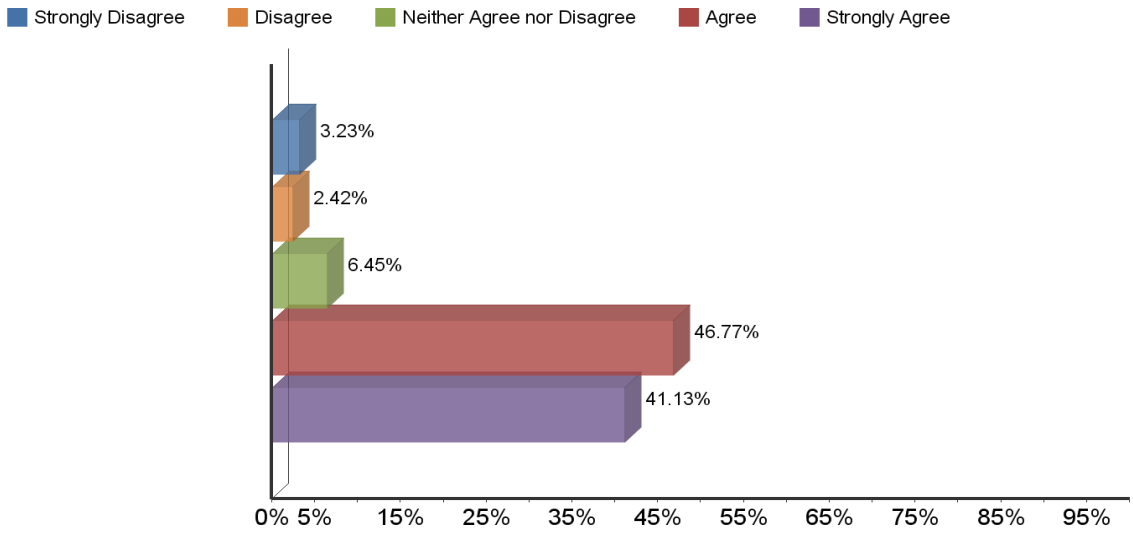


**Figure 22 - Perceptions on contribution to society**

The majority of the respondents to this survey (N=58; 46.77 percent) agrees with the referred sentence, followed by 51 participants (41.13 percent) who strongly agree. The combined value of agreement (N=109; 87.9 percent) suggest that cultural translation is a structural inherent value in international news reporting culture from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Regarding language fluency, most respondents claim to be fluent in 2-3 languages (N=89; 71.77 percent), followed by those who only speak their native language (N=19; 15.32 percent) and finally by the international news reporters who are fluent in four or more languages (N=16; 12.90 percent). Results are higher than the ones previously documented (Hess, 1996).

The interview process also enlightened cultural translation as a structural inherent feature of international news reporting culture from Sub-Saharan Africa. "All foreign correspondents are translators", says Katherine Houreld, correspondent for The Associated Press in Nairobi. "That's the value of having a foreigner and not a local journalist, because they can translate for people back home."

Cultural translation demands from international news reporters an attitude towards cultural immersion. "In journalism", states Amanda Fortier, a freelancer reporter based in Dakar, "you need the skills but you end up needing much more than just the skills. I really believe that there should be more exchange between local journalists and foreign correspondents, sharing knowledge, sharing skills, sharing cultural understanding."

José Miguel Calatayud, a freelancer correspondent for El País, based in Nairobi, shares this vision, arguing that journalists "contribute to the improvement of societies. Any country who wants to be a free democracy it needs to have a free press. And particularly foreign journalism can contribute to the mutual understanding of different people."

This search for contextualized information while working along areas of cross-cultural exchange and contestation is responsible for a critical and structuring tension within professional foreign correspondents culture: between *novelty* and *experience*, *detachment* and *immersion*.

David Smith, working for The Guardian in Johannesburg, recognizes that "it's pretty difficult [to keep a balance between immersion and detachment]". For him, the *fresh eyes on the scene* are supported by "editors based in London. The routine is that every day I send them a memo with maybe three or four suggestions of stories and they get back to me. Some of them may be too local. But I'm not in South Africa all the time. I go to Zimbabwe, Congo or Somalia. So, when I get back to South Africa that kind of renews it with freshness."

The initial cross-cultural contacts demand a considerable personal commitment from correspondents. "If you're coming here like I did the first time", says Amanda Fortier, a freelancer in Dakar, "seeing, as everybody does when they step out the plane, the stories that are blowing in your face are not necessarily the most important to be covered." This initial feeling of cognitive unpreparedness provides the justification why for Erin Conway-Smith, Global Post correspondent in Johannesburg, her "first year or two here weren't the easiest, because you have to catch up with so much and really learn what's happening. That's why I think a correspondent should stay for longer."

Erin's interpretation favors longer experience as a mean for *catching up* cultural intricacies. Although in news practice this route also poses challenges for international news reporters. For Katherine Houreld, The Associated Press correspondent in Nairobi, the problem is that "I'm already in Africa for eight years and don't necessarily see already the angle back home now". For Katherine this means that the things she finds "interesting are not necessarily the things back home would find interesting. So, yeah it's a problem, because you start to see with the eyes of the people who live there and not with the eyes of the people that read you."

Thus, a tension arises among foreign reporters between preserving what can be perceived as an ability to build news reports from a *detached stance*, "an outsider perspective" says William Davies (AP, in Nairobi), i.e. "someone who is not necessarily and expert, but someone who has fresh eyes" and the needed *personal immersion* to build a body of knowledge *on* and *within* a distinct culture:

> *If you want to be an African correspondent you have to be part of the community. I'm here for so long that I have almost no foreign friends. For diplomats it's just the same thing: «Get out of your glass house and get there! Meet the people. Go and buy the fruit and talk to the lady how much the petro price went up and things like that». Then you get a relevant view of what the country is.* (Excerpt from interview with Ilona Eveleens, correspondent for TROUW, TAZ and N-24 based in Nairobi)

In other words: "While the rules of objective journalism prohibit reporters from making subjective interpretations, their task demands it" (Pedelty 1995, 7). This distinctive and sensitive *epistemological ambiguity* (the "translation") is suggested by an attempt to balance *empiricism* and *objectivism:*

> *It's a double edge sword, because there's also the risk of you become like another South Africa media outlet and lose touch contact with what readers in Britain and the rest of the world are interested in. Your nose it's too close to the glass and you can no longer see the big picture. Sometimes being the guy flying in from London to Afghanistan, sometimes those people produce the best stories, because their fresh eyes: they see things reporters based there no longer see. One desk editor said "You'll be doing your best work in South Africa in your first year, because is still exciting and new. And after the first year you'll no longer see the way African women tie their babies in the back, in Johannesburg you'll no longer see the high security walls with the electric fences".* (Excerpt from interview with David Smith, correspondent for The Guardian, based in Johannesburg)

*You need a person that can see the situation in the country, first of all, with the eyes of someone who is an outsider. For example, the media in South Africa: Much of what's happening it's too micro, it will not interest foreign readers. On the other hand, obviously you still want to know what's going on in the country but from that perspective of standing back a little bit.* (Excerpt from interview with Erin Conway-Smith, correspondent for Global Post, based in Johannesburg)

*It's hard for a foreign to understand all the intricacies of Mali clans, but it's also difficult to be a local and understand it and be able to explain it to an international audience. It doesn't matter who doesn't, but it's the ability to get in and dig for that level of information, detail and understanding in an international context.* (Excerpt from interview with David Lewis, staff correspondent for Reuters, based in Dakar)

On another level, despite a general prescriptive cultural rule of thumb towards cross-cultural exchanges, recognition exist among practitioners working across Sub-Saharan Africa that international news reporting is permeable to a process of self-restraint or self-preservation towards the implementation of *expat bubbles*, exposing that interconnectedness between contact zones must not be automatically assumed as multiculturalism. In Friedman (2002) terms, even if the "container" is multicultural, the resulting social experiences may well be substantially monocultural, kept in a state of insularity (Chakars, 2009):

*I think foreign correspondents try to preserve that distance by putting themselves and keeping themselves in a bubble locally. a freelancer correspondent based in South Africa.* (Excerpt from interview with Eve Fairbanks, a freelancer correspondent based in South Africa)

*In Dakar you can easily live a very Western life and lots of journalists here end up living in this kind of bubble, so they are missing a lot of subtleties about the culture and the issues that you don't necessarily see when you're not here.* (Excerpt from interview with Amanda Fortier, a freelancer reporter based in Dakar)

Even if this study is dedicated to a micro-level of observations (individual), the interview process also revealed noteworthy aspects regarding organizational news cultures (meso-level). These can be essentially understood within *framing* theory and reveal *the organizational level as a disambiguation factor* in news production:

> *Even if you bring a local, for example I consider myself a local but I work within certain strict guidelines, even if you bring a local citizen journalist it's not because I'm a foreigner that makes the information I provide any different. It's the way I operate, the way I collect the information, the way that I write it and present it. The readers look for fair, balanced, accurate, checked information. And there is an all editorial layer of checks and balances.* (Excerpt from interview with Felix Bate, Reuters correspondent in Dakar)

> *The correspondent is there for their particular publication. So, they must be able to serve them better than the news editor back at home. What often happens is that the news editor tells the correspondent what he has to cut or send someone else to shopping malls and posh hotels and then he will be «Where's the African Savannah? Well… that's not really here». That's perhaps what they want to see. You're still getting a bit of that.* (Excerpt from interview with Eva-Lotta Jansson Fairbanks, a freelancer photographer based in South Africa)

## 6.5. Africa's media image: Professionals and Pro-Ams

International news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa generally recognize representational deficits regarding Africa's media image (N=76; 61.29%).

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "Africa's media image is balanced". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level. Results are represented in Table 9.

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Africa's media image is balanced. | 17.74% | 43.55% | 27.42% | 11.29% | 0.00% | 124 |

**Table 9 - Africa's media image**

Surveyed practitioners working across Sub-Saharan Africa are considerably divided concerning the contribution from professional foreign correspondents to a balanced media image from Africa.

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "The overall coverage of Africa by professional foreign correspondents is balanced". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level.

Most respondents to this survey (N=40; 32.26 percent) disagrees with the referred sentence, evidencing that some self-criticism exist among international news reporters concerning professional news coverage of Africa. Although, this critical sense is tempered by respondents who neither agree nor disagree (N=35; 28.23 percent) and by those who agree that the overall coverage of the continent by professional foreign correspondents is balanced (N=35; 28.23 percent).

These findings towards a sense of ambiguity are further reinforced when coverage by Pro-Ams/citizen journalists is considered. Again, a sentence was presented to the respondents: "The overall coverage of Africa by Pro-Ams/citizen journalists is balanced". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level.

The majority of the respondents don't have a defined opinion on the subject (N=49; 39.52 percent). These are followed by 35 respondents (28.23 percent) who are

critical and disagree that Pro-Am/citizen journalists coverage of Africa is balanced. On the other hand, 27 participants (21.77 percent) consider it balanced.

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The overall coverage of Africa by professional foreign correspondents is balanced. | 8.06% | 32.26% | 28.23% | 28.23% | 3.23% | 124 |
| The overall coverage of Africa by Pro-Ams/ citizen journalists is balanced. | 6.45% | 28.23% | 39.52% | 21.77% | 4.03% | 124 |

**Table 10 - Balance in coverage by professionals and by Pro-Ams**

Our interviews with professional correspondents allowed deepening their perception on Sub-Saharan Africa media image construction.

International news reporters like Ilona Eveleens, correspondent for TROUW, TAZ and N-24 based in Nairobi, recognize that "Africa has a problem: it is not very popular with the established journalist. They all want to go to Washington, London, Paris, Beijing… Those are the places where your career is going", she says. "You don't stay in Africa. You just don't. So, when you get here there are a lot of young people who start their career here. They start and then go to some place, you know, more glamorous than Africa."

Ilona words describe Sub-Saharan Africa as an overall *subsidiary geography* within the career path for professional news reporters. This perception over *location* is reinforced by Allan Boswell on *news content*. The McClatchy Newspapers correspondents based in Nairobi recognizes that "Africa – except some things now, as Somalia – it is not so crucial that stories are a must. In this beat there aren't currently much «must do stories for U.S. newspapers» but there are very interesting stories", he declares.

Within this perception framework towards a *globally subsidiary region,* practitioners' narratives about Africa's representation in news media are shaped by economic constraints (macro), production routines (meso) and reporters' professional experience (micro), all of them interacting over practitioners' new work.

The first are notoriously depicted by a life story by José Miguel Calatayud, the freelancer correspondent for El País, based in Nairobi:

*I was in South Sudan last year, in Juba. I don't know if you've been there but it's not developed at all: there's no power, no water, no tarmac, it's very hot, a complicated city. So, we, almost all the journalists ended up going to the same place, a kind of restaurant/hotel that had a more reliable power, free Internet, and fast by South Sudanese standards... One day I checked my article online, it came with a photograph «South Sudan independent blab la bla» and the photographs were of friends of mine. And actually I looked up and all these photographers were there. The Reuters guy was there, the AFP was there, the AP was there, and at this point I was still the only Spanish journalist there. And all those guys were my friends, we were chatting, going together covering things. So, a very, very, very small group of people who shared everything was informing I guess more than half the world about this story; at least the whole Western world. And it sounded scary because we were saying the same things, in different languages, but the same things: we were seeing something together, come back, talking and at the end we kind of had agreed on the version that we were giving tour audience. And all of those happen to be very good journalists. All trying to be responsible, serious, but again the fact that it was such a small group of people talking… it was accurate, but it was partial. If some of us had more resources we could go to some other places other than Juba, because I couldn't risk lose my equipment, then I couldn't work at all… Also, if you could have more journalists there that would increase let's say the competition: you want to go somewhere else, if it's healthy and responsible competition I think that would have open the coverage.*

José Miguel depiction reveals critical operating conditions in which major international news organizations – in this case, news agencies – with virtual global reach cover extraordinary historical events (e.g. South Sudan independence): a "*very, very, very small group of people",* freelancer/non-staff reporters, working around hostile conditions ("*there's no power, no water, no tarmac, it's very hot, a complicated city"*), sharing "*everything"* in order to minimize costs, managing logistical constraints ("*I couldn't risk lose my equipment, then I couldn't work at all")* producing what has been termed *pack journalism* (*"we were saying the same things, in different languages"*), perceived as *"accurate, but partial".*

Cumulatively, and even if news correspondents are not consciously aware of it, production routines are also implicated in the representational news process, as expressively narrated by N., a television journalist:

*When you're planning a news pack, a mini-documentary, generally you have a little more time to decide where the story is going to. So, you have more control over your control, it's not a breaking story, a press conference or something you don't have control over. But yet we fall in to the trap where we say «Ok, I need to speak with A and then speak to B and I need to get a quote. In fact I think I'm going to lead with this one». Or you even say «Oh, I'll have this case study and I want it to be this mother who is struggling in*

*Kibera slum, I want a crying child on the background». So, you predetermined your story. Maybe that is how should be, I don't know, in order to meet your deadline or maybe you should just let news happen.*

N. account demonstrates a perhaps less intentional level of international news construction from Sub-Saharan Africa. Although, a much more deliberated and planned level of personal intervention over news content interferes with the Continent's media image, as raised by Katherine Houreld, The Associated Press correspondent in Nairobi:

*The coverage of Africa is poor, has been poor for long time. And part of that is the fault of lazy journalists who don't go out and find some stories and just recycle stuff. Or they just conform to stereotypes. There is one notorious report that came out Nigeria when they [other journalists] went see some gangs – the same gangs we all go out to visit, you know, you arrange with them by email, meet them over the creeks, they use their mask, they shoot a little bit because they like to be on TV – and the reporter on this occasion was «We were just in the creeks where we happen to find this people…». No you didn't. And then they got them to shoot next to the head of hostages what is obviously totally unethical. And the reporter «This has all to do with black magic in the swamp». No, it's not! It's do with the oil industry and corruption in local government. But that takes you more 15 seconds to say and it's not as interesting as black magic.*

Katherine's story vividly depicts the search, among certain international news reporters, of *spectacular, exotic* and even *mystical* tales to portray. It also touches three other critical factors: *seated journalism* ("*lazy journalists who don't go out and find some stories and just recycle stuff*"), *faulty intellectual preparation* for the task (*"This has all to do with black magic in the swamp". No, it's not! It's do with the oil industry and corruption in local government."*), and the *narrative conventions for specific media* (TV in the case): "*that takes you more 15 seconds to say and it's not as interesting as black magic".*

Lastly, a critical perception over years of experience also emerged from our interviews as an impacting factor within news representation of Sub-Saharan Africa. Ilona Eveleens, a veteran Africa correspondent for TROUW, TAZ and N-24, based in Nairobi, exposes it:

*There's nothing wrong with young people, because they come and look with very fresh eyes, and they see things that have become normal for me. But they also lack lots of background. So, what they do is hell of a lot of copy, a lot of copy! And I don't say I didn't copy sometimes, but in my 16 years here I hardly read any other book than about Africa. It's so much work and I need to know in order to understand. They don't have that baggage, that luggage. So, the stereotyping of Africa is happening.*

# CHAPTER 7– NEWSWORK OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORTERS WORKING ACROSS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

This chapter presents the results of a survey of international news reporters working across 41 Sub-Saharan Africa countries regarding professional news culture. Based in the answers of 124 respondents, our objective it is to answer to the following questions:

**RQ7:** Are international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa globally connected concerning: Internet access, its frequency and purpose of use?

**RQ8:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive Internet as benefiting the overall quality and quantity of news reporting from the region?

**RQ9:** Do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive technical preparation as being important in a convergent media environment?

**RQ10:** How do international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa position themselves in networked journalism, concerning: maintenance of a personal weblog and/or website, an active account in one or more online social networks, perception of credibility of information from online social networks and online search engines, participation of public in news work, direct collaboration between journalists and citizens, and ethical standards?

**RQ11**: What are international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa labor conditions, concerning: socio-economic typologies, perception about financial situation and social security, legal protection, career expectations, and work-family relations?

**RQ12:** What are the most relevant constraints that impend over the news work of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, considering: audience perception and feedback, beats, competition, newsgathering activities and sources.

The results will be articulated with the previous findings presented in the literature review and systematically expanded through the qualitative insights collected using semi-structured interviews with 43 international news reporters based in Nairobi, Dakar and Johannesburg.

## 7.1. Narratives about Internet and digital media impact on journalism

Since this thesis inspects long-term trajectories in international journalism combined with short-term developments based on transformations on microelectronics and digitization, in the scope of our interviews we dedicated some questions to investigate the shared narratives of repositioning, i.e. "how members of a specific culture attempt to make themselves a(t) home in a transforming communicative environment, how they can find themselves in this environment and at the same time try to mould it in their own image" (Miller & Slater, 2000, p. 1). The general question can be formulated as: *How do international news reporters engage with how Internet media position them within networks that transcend their immediate location?* We can start answering with two emerging self-narratives.

First, *a narrative of destructuration generated by transformations in the material basis of journalism,* relevant on a technological as well as on an economic level:

> *It's repositioning and we are not driving it. This is just happening to us. There's of course a sour element here on what used to be our sphere, like "We were the ones who tell people what to think about the world". We were these kinds of God-like figures saying "This is what you must think. This is what happened" and now that has been challenged. That hegemony is being eroded.* (Excerpt from interview with T., a freelancer online news media correspondent)

> *I see journalism as a moribund industry. It's clear that the money is kind of waiving away from the industry.* (Excerpt from interview with L., a staff journalist working for a major international news agency)

> *My main concern is that funding has gone eviscerated, both by free content appearing on the Internet and by the flight of classified advertising to specialized websites. Advertising used to pay to us produce news stories. Now we have virtually no budget. I had to give up on fantastic stories because we just don't have the money to do them.*
>
> ***So, the story got untold?***
>
> *No, no. I told it, but told it from here [office in Nairobi]. And it was a huge story. You know, I had in the last couple months ignored deadly attacks in Northern Kenya by Al Shabaab linked groups because we couldn't pay stringers 40 dollars to send us the story! I mean, I'm really talking about 40, 50 dollars apiece. So we ignored it. Our subscribers can't pay anymore for our services and we can't charge them more,*

*because we know they are suffering.* (Dialogue excerpt from interview with Katherine Houreld, The Associated Press correspondent in Nairobi)

Second, a *narrative of restructuration as an opportunity for news innovation and entrepreneurship:*

*I think that how the media is changing there's plenty of opportunities for correspondents to be entrepreneurial and come up with new ways. I'm working on an Ipad book with a photographer. We had to fund ourselves and eventually get the money back. With Amazon you can now self-publish things. With the e-books and the Ipad it will be a away. I think with the last trend in media, the e-books and tablets, there are actually opportunities for people to monetize what you are doing. I think that didn't even come to shake yet but I would be surprised if in 5 years there wouldn't be more mediums for independent journalism. They probably can't be paid for themselves but may give people some supplemental income and a way to not to stay so dependent of traditional media.* (Excerpt from interview with Alan Boswell, McClatchy newspapers' correspondent based in Nairobi)

*Hopefully the iPad or the eBook or whatever will offer the opportunity for something like a newspaper in a more advanced way, but at least there will be more information than just the news item of the minute, and you can make time, seat back and try to understand something. But I think in 10, 15 years there will no newspapers. I mean, not the thing we are talking about now.* (Excerpt from interview with Ilona Eveleens, correspondent for TROUW, TAZ and N-24 based in Nairobi)

*You just have to get over it and stop complaining. It's here and it's not going away. Either you can have fun with it or you can be stick in mud and say "I don't tweet, I don't do that".* (Excerpt from interview with Anita Powell, correspondent for Associated Press in Johannesburg)

## 7.2. Internet access among international news reporters in Sub-Saharan Africa

Almost all international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa (N=122; 98.39 percent) have physical access to the Internet in their work space, as illustrated in Figure 23.

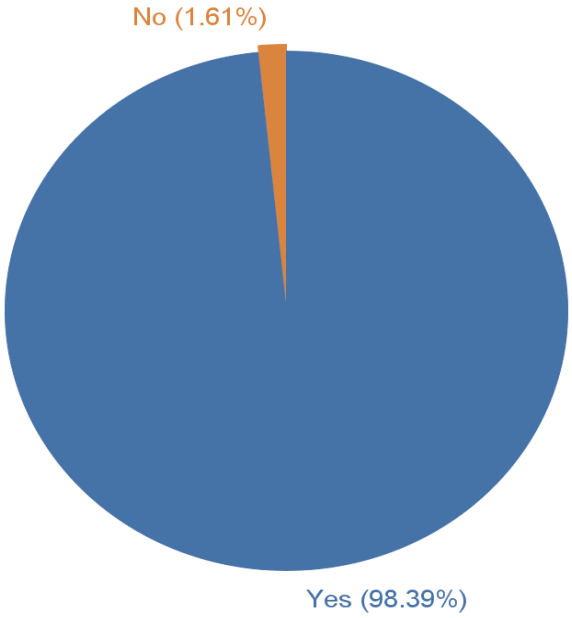


**Figure 23 - Internet access**

### 7.3. Frequency of Internet access among international news reporters in Sub-Saharan Africa

All participants in this survey claim to access the Internet in a daily basis. Most international news reporters (N=60; 48.39 percent) access and use it over eight hours a day. Others access it and use it from five to seven hours a day (N=33; 26.61 percent) and the remaining from two to four hours a day (N=31; 25 percent).

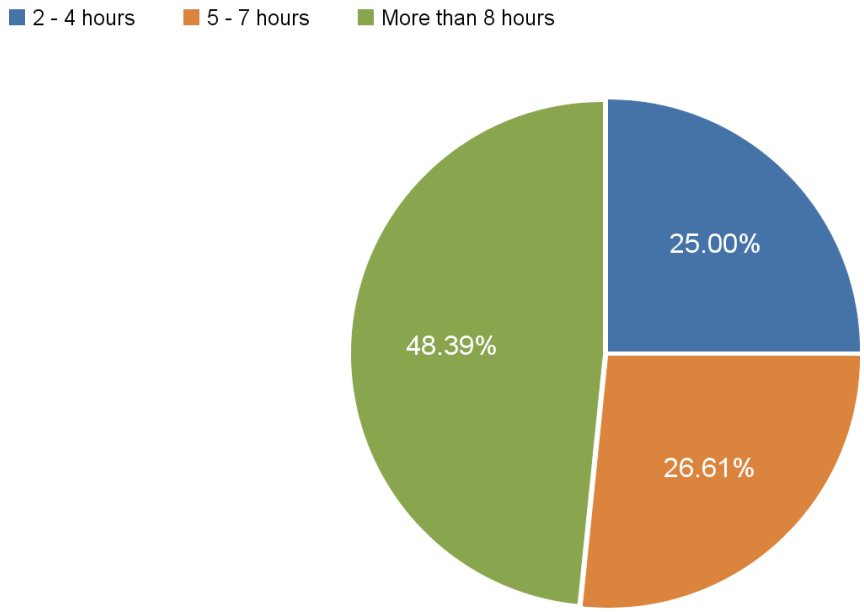


**Figure 24 - Internet access frequency**

These findings reveal that Internet is deeply transforming international news reporters' newswork, absorbing a considerable amount of daily time: less than a decade ago, 45 percent of correspondents working in the U.S. spent 2-3 hours using it as a research tool (Hess, 2005).

## 7.4. Purpose of Internet use among international news reporters in Sub-Saharan Africa

Respondents were asked to order items (rank three predefined activities and one open option) from most to less frequent, regarding purpose of use of the Internet. Since multiple combinations were possible in a universe of 124 participants in the survey, we identified the most frequent purpose of use within the corresponding position in the rank (Borda count). This method determines the level of consensus on a choice, i.e. the broadly acceptable purposes of Internet use. Since Borda count determines "the winner" by giving each option a certain number of points corresponding to the position in which it appears (3 points for #1 in Rank, 2 points for #2 in Rank, 1 point for #3 in Rank) it is possible to see an option with more votes (number of answers) in a lower rank position "to loose" for an option in a higher position in rank with fewer votes.

| Rank# | Purpose | Number of responses | Percent of responses | Value | Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Newsgathering | 64 | 51.61% | 3 | **192** |
| 2 | Newsgathering | 44 | 35.48% | 2 | 88 |
| 3 | Newsgathering | 13 | 10.48% | 1 | 13 |

**Table 11 - Purpose of Internet use: Newsgathering**

| Rank# | Purpose | Number of responses | Percent of responses | Value | Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | News Publication | 23 | 18.55% | 3 | 69 |
| 2 | News Publication | 58 | 46.77% | 2 | **116** |
| 3 | News Publication | 40 | 32.26% | 1 | 40 |

**Table 12 - Purpose of Internet use: News Publication**

| Rank# | Purpose | Number of responses | Percent of responses | Value | Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Administrative Purposes | 29 | 23.39% | 3 | **87** |
| 2 | Administrative Purposes | 17 | 13.71% | 2 | 34 |
| 3 | Administrative Purposes | 67 | 54.03% | 1 | 67 |

**Table 13 - Purpose of Internet use: Administrative purposes**

In order to capture emergent internet purposes of use among international news reporters across Sub-Saharan Africa we provided a fourth response option (an open answer as #4 in Rank), designated as "other"; 22 respondents (17.74%) decided to specify their fourth most common purpose of Internet use: online social networking (N=7; 5.65%), research (N=6; 4.84%), communication with colleagues (N=4; 3.23%), e-mailing (N=3; 2.42%), and sending content to home desk (N=2; 1.61%).

## 7.5. Perceptions on Internet: quality and quantity of news reporting from sub-Saharan Africa

As observed in the methodology chapter, the structural constraints regarding Internet access in Sub-Saharan Africa are considerable, particularly access to broadband connections.

Within this context, international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa clearly perceive the Internet as benefiting both the quality and the quantity of news coverage from Africa.

The following two sentences were presented to the respondents: "Internet benefits the overall quality of international news reporting from Africa" and "Internet benefits the overall quantity of international news reporting from Africa". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level.

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Internet benefits the overall quality of international news reporting from Africa. . | 0.00% | 3.23% | 14.52% | 42.74% | 39.52% | 124 |
| Internet benefits the overall quantity of international news reporting from Africa. | 0.81% | 1.61% | 11.29% | 47.58% | 38.71% | 124 |

**Table 14 - Perceptions on Internet: Quality and Quantity**

Findings reveal that the majority of respondents agree (N=53; 42.74%) or strongly agree (N=49; 39.52%) that the Internet benefits the overall quality of international news reporting from Africa. The combined value is of N=102; 82.26%.

At the same time, most respondents agree (N=59; 47.58%) or strongly agree (N=48; 38.71%) that the Internet benefits the overall quantity of international news reporting from Africa. The combined value of is of N=107; 86.29%.

Critically, interviews with international news reporters suggest that this further *quantity* it's easily incompatible with further *quality*, particularly due to a *perceived increase of speed constraints and constant availability* for newswork:

> *Previously in the middle of a war zone such as Monrovia you would have to spend half the day shooting and half the day developing the film. It was quite a laborious process. Of course, with this increase in technology came increase of demands, more platforms. Gone are the days where all that a journalist needed to do in order to earn his money was to account his story by telephone to the newsroom. Now you have much more demands, updates. Web-based channels, 24 hour news, Twitter feeds, Facebook updates, video blogs, blogs. There's much more less time for reflection. [Journalists] are always on call, permanent deadlines. There's*

*also a tremendous pressure for a convergence of skills: take photos, write the story, update the story…* (Excerpt from interview with Anthony Morland, journalist working for IRIN News, based in Nairobi)

*When I started in 1984, I would write my stories by hand, put them in a mail envelop, send it to a colleague in Holland who would give it to another colleague to type out the story and then he would try to sell it. I mean, it used to take weeks for the story to get published or even to get across. These days thanks to the Internet and all that came with it not only the ability to be faster in your work increased enormously but also of course the amount of information you can handle is mind boggling actually: it just never stops. You have really to decide: "Ok, now I'll just go to bed and tomorrow is another day".* (Excerpt from interview with Kees Broere, De Volskrant correspondent based in Nairobi)

*There's now a constant bombardment of e-mail, a blessing and a curse: amazing how you can get interview requests, sometimes in Africa e-mail works better than the phone. The downside is that whatever job you're doing in journalism, with e-mail it's just too easy to send a press release. I spend too many hours dealing with that. The web is an incredible research tool, comparing with the old days. Instead of wasting a day on the phone looking to check a fact, now that's one Google search away. That means that we can produce two or three stories a day. I have a feeling we're working harder and there's fewer of us.* (Excerpt from interview with David Smith, correspondent for The Guardian, based in Johannesburg)

## 7.6. Convergence: perceptions on technical needs and skills

International news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa consider technical preparation as being important in a convergent media environment. Plus, they consider themselves prepared to work in a media environment based in multimedia and cross-platform news production.

The following two sentences were presented to the respondents: "In a convergent media environment (multimedia and cross-platform) it is important to be technically prepared" and "I am technically prepared to work in a convergent media environment". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level.

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In a convergent media environment (multimedia and cross-platform) it is important to be technically prepared. | 0.81% | 0.00% | 3.23% | 41.94% | 54.03% | 124 |
| I am technically prepared to work in a convergent media environment. | 0.81% | 2.42% | 11.29% | 52.42% | 33.06% | 124 |

**Table 15 - Perceptions on media convergence: Technical skills**

Findings reveal that the majority of respondents agree (N=52; 41.94%) or strongly agree (N=67; 54.03%) that in a convergent media environment (multimedia and cross-platform) it is important to be technically prepared. The combined value is of N=119; 95.97%.

At the same time, most respondents agree (N=65; 52.42%) or strongly agree (N=41; 33.06%) that themselves are technically prepared to work in a convergent media environment. The combined value of is of N=106; 85.48%.

## 7.7. Convergence: multimedia production

Based on our interviews, multimedia news production is now an emerging reality in international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa. "Providing digital material including video footage and full video reports to complement print articles", states PM., a reporter for a business media company based in South Africa, "is now a part of our duties." Regularly, adds Andrew Harding, BBC journalist in Johannesburg, "it means a bigger workload these days with more and more demands for online material".

Multimedia news production, the way it is *actually* practiced within the intervening organizations, is generally perceived by international news reporters as a trend towards a degradation of quality in newswork.

More specifically, multimedia journalism is regarded by practitioners within the framework of *cost-saving strategies* by media organizations, articulated through a lack of objective investment in training, equipment, proper production routines and salaries:

> *Newspapers are just getting in this new trend but not necessarily want to invest in training or in the equipment. When you go to do a story you have to think "«This is for radio but I can also do a print version and take photos. Since I need the audio I may take the video as well". So, as a freelancer I have to think that way, you have to think multimedia and reselling, like "I spent 200 dollars on this story. How will I get that money back?"* (Excerpt from interview with Alice Klein, a freelancer journalism working in Kenya)

> *I did find that in any given day it was very hard to do both. I was rather the guy with the video camera or I would go with the notebook. It's extremely hard, because you're asking different kind of questions. You're looking for different things. Time is a zero sum. If I was spending hours editing video, I couldn't be meeting people or reading, or even just thinking about what I'm going to do in the next day.* (Excerpt from interview with David Smith, correspondent for The Guardian, based in Johannesburg)

> *I don't have a problem for my photo essay to be online, but they have to pay. [Independent] Long term projects make no money most of the time, but they're really important. Lots of projects are priceless, but in a way you have to have money from somewhere. Online is great but no one is paying. They just put your things online and it's free. If you do an assignment for The New York Times, their subscribers get to use the photos for free.* (Excerpt from interview with Mariella Furrer, a freelancer photojournalist and documentary photographer based in Johannesburg)

In current newswork, multimedia news production means *multitasking* and *multiskilling*:

*You have to be multitasking nowadays. Of course if you have to do many things the quality goes down. Currently I'm mainly doing video. If you're shooting alone you have some advantages and some inconvenient. If you are a team of four people, the image will be really nice, the sound will be excellent, although if less discrete. But it's not the same product.* (Excerpt from interview with Horaci Garcia Marti, a freelancer journalist based in Dakar)

*We are more and more asked to be a one-man team. So, wherever I'm deployed I have to do radio, TV and online, most of the time on my own. The work load is just crazy. I covered the conflict in Ivory Coast in two different trips. In my first trip I was sent there my own. I was there 10 days, you know, sleeping 3 hours a day, jumping from radio lives to TV lives, setting myself up for TV, filming, doing rough-cuts, sending footage to London for them to put it together, I would voiced the script. Then you must review the script for online. We are no longer a radio reporter or a TV reporter. We are asked to do multimedia stuff. Actually, my newsgathering… it's becoming a luxury now.* (Excerpt from interview with Thomas Fessy, BBC correspondent based in Dakar)

*My news media outlet is moving away from being a journalist or a reporter working in one domain. They are now encouraging us to be multimedia professionals. So, if I go out in an assignment you'll find me going out with a small gadget that will capture video and audio. So, I'll come and download my material from the camera: the video will be used online and the audio will be used by radio. They are encouraging it also in order to cut down in the number of staff. They want people to me more multitasking.* (Excerpt from interview with Ruth Nesoba, correspondent for BBC News, based in Nairobi)

This emerging *precariousness* of production routines, with journalists creating multiple media "from the side", in Ilona Eveleens' words, the correspondent for TROUW, TAZ and N-24 based in Nairobi, is based on a dual expectation by employers, advances T., a freelancer online news media correspondent:

*The expectation that you'll do all this stuff without necessarily an extra pay – yet it takes a huge amount of time – and there's also the recognition among us that are doing it that what we are producing is not that good. If I pick up a video camera it will became kind of rubbish, whereas if you call a video guy who spent all his career doing it, it will be good. It's costs cutting but also the imperative is "Stuff, the quality doesn't matter. Just produce stuff". The quality doesn't matter it is just the volume. There's a gradual erosion of the quality of the product. You know, there's a reason for having professionals in certain areas!*

In essence, from practitioners' narratives, news organizations demands for multimedia journalism translate in a fundamental paradox regarding *professionalism* as an argument towards a guarantee of an exclusive quality of their stock of knowledge.

In reality, even if prescribed as a differentiation factor (boundary work), in multimedia journalism from Sub-Saharan Africa, *professionalism* tends to mean *dysfunctional and precarious news production*, with media houses bringing in "people whom they call content producers, so they are not journalists anymore", observes Alice Klein, a freelancer journalism working in Kenya. "What they are doing is picking content, put it online, adding the necessary photos, editing a video, embed it on the page, putting in all the metadata, tweeting, linking and it is just like this virtual competition for who can get the most hits, I guess, individually, which is sad because newspapers are really the benchmark of quality."

## 7.8. Networked journalism: maintenance of personal weblog and/or website

The field of international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa is strictly polarized regarding practitioners who maintain a personal weblog and/or website.

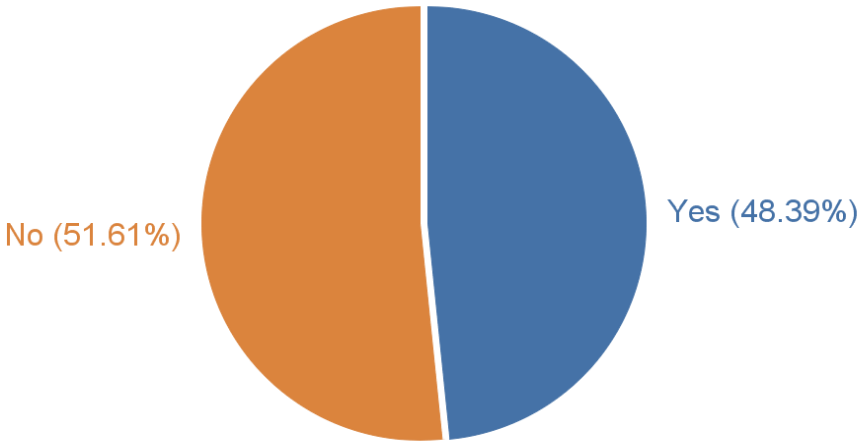


**Figure 25 - Maintenance of personal weblog and/or website**

## 7.9. Networked journalism: maintenance of active account in online social networks

Although, this polarization it is completely vanished when it comes to analyze maintenance of active accounts in one or more online social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.

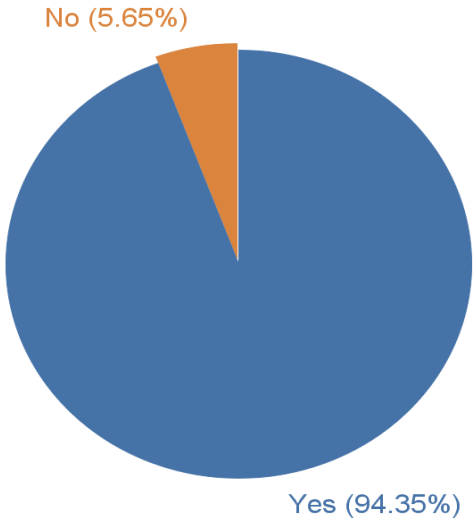


**Figure 26 - Maintenance of active account in online social networks**

## 7.10. Networked journalism: perceptions on credibility of information from online social networks and online search engines

Respondents were asked to rate the credibility of information from online social networks and from online search engines.

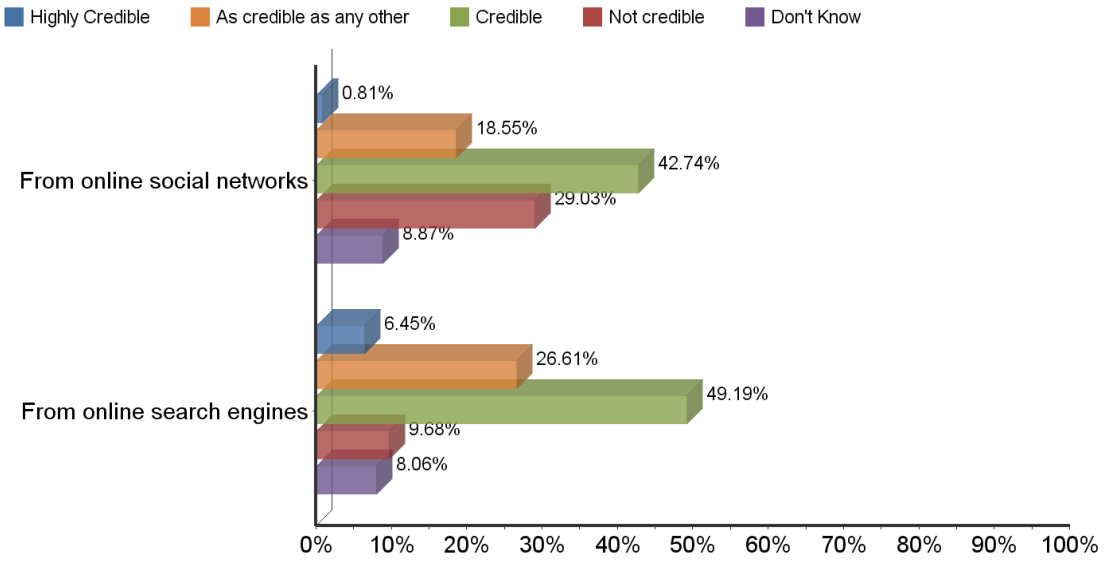


**Figure 27 - Credibility of information from online social networks and online search engines**

International news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa generally trust in the credibility of information from online social networks (N=53; 42.74%) and from online search engines (N=61; 49.19%). Although, a particular consideration is noteworthy: the level of immediate distrust (not credible) is significantly higher regarding information from online social networks (N=36; 29.03%) than when regarding information from online search engines (N=12; 9.68%). This finding supports previous research signaling "the reliability and credibility of information as the greatest risk or danger of using social media" (*Journalists and Social Media*, 2012, p. 7).

## 7.11. Networked journalism: perceptions on the participation of the public in newswork and on direct collaboration between journalists and citizens

International news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa advocate more participation of the public in newswork. They perceive the quality of news production as being higher when direct collaboration between journalists and citizens occurs.

The following two sentences were presented to the respondents: "Journalists need to give public a more participative role in news work" and "Direct collaboration between journalists and citizens in news production benefits the overall quality of news reporting".

According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level.

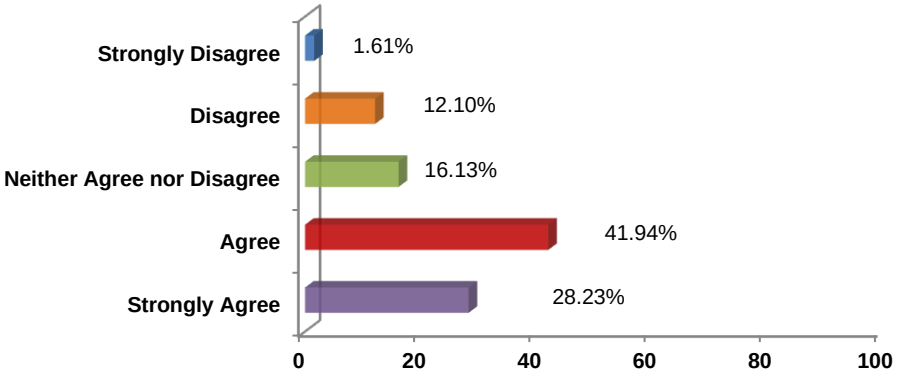


**Figure 28 - Participation of the public in newswork**

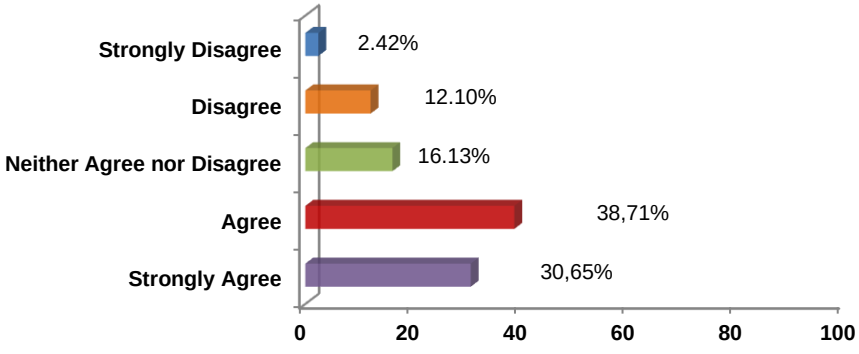


**Figure 29 - Direct collaboration between journalists and citizens**

## 7.12. Networked journalism: perceptions on the need of renewed ethical standards

International news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa feel the need for new ethical standards in order to adequately adopt user-generated content in news work.

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "New ethical standards are needed in order to adequately adopt user-generated content in news work".

According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level.

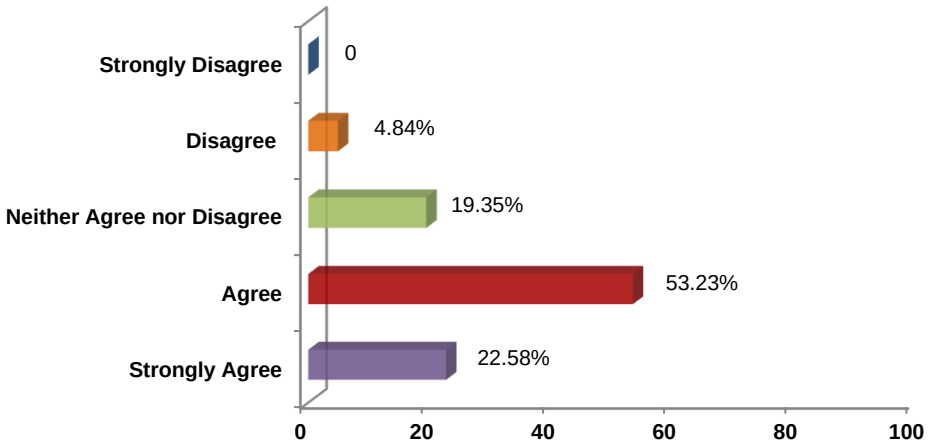


**Figure 30 – Need for new ethical standards in order to adopt user-generated content in news work**

Previous research signaled that "social media is not seen as separate from the more general reporting ethics that governs the use of both traditional sources and social media" (*Journalists and Social Media*, 2012, p. 8). We suggest that our findings clearly show that practitioners actually feel the need for more *unambiguous and clarifying guidance*, translated in specific guidelines and codes of conduct for their newswork.

## 7.13. Labor conditions: socio-economic meanings of freelancing

Historically, international news reporting has been performed by a very diverse group of freelance journalists (Hess, 1994, 1996). Our study on the Sub-Saharan reality confirms that this global trend it's also in place in Africa.

Most respondents to our survey are freelancers (N=48; 38.71 percent) and a considerable number of respondents work as stringers (N=15; 12.10 percent). The resulting value from combining freelancers and stringers is of 63 responses (50.81 percent).

This led us to a further inquiry on the actual socio-economic work conditions of these news workers, since practitioners themselves show considerable assurance that "the readers have no idea on what takes to be a freelancer covering Africa. We are trying to do good job writing about Africa, while also trying to do a good job being here. It's so hard.", states Rose Skelton, a freelancer correspondent based in Dakar. Our effort it's directed to that knowledge gap.

Accounts by interviewed freelance international news reporters critically evolve towards a narrative of socio-economic *precarity,* "employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker" (Kallenberg, 2009, p. 2). This precarious work translates in irregular and low salary levels, payment by (news) piece, temporary employment contracts, social insecurity and hectic production routines:

> *You need to find enough work to sustain and pay your life here. I mean… I don't go to UN parties and drink wine with lots of experts, which all the correspondents do… It's a very hand to mouth existence: you have good weeks when you have enough work and feel really busy, and then you have a quiet week and then you start freaking out "How do I go make rent? How do I do money to eat?" The pay now for freelancers is quite bad. Especially for the newspapers that take something and put it online it's between like sometimes less than 60 pounds, 90 in the UK, per piece. They just put it online because the paper is getting smaller. That limits how much you can research something. You may be at the edge of an amazing story but you realize that at the end of the day paying for accommodation, transport, the fixer, living expenses, while you are also paying rent in Nairobi you may get one quarter of it. Even if it sells, sometimes you end up not being paid back for the money you've invested.* (Excerpt from interview with Alice Klein, a freelancer journalism working in Kenya)

*One of the reasons that took me to pick this offer as a staff is that it's now so much hard to keep as a freelancer and you get requests for so much stuff. It's not just text, also photographs and video is increasingly important, its increased pressure. (…) Things like Twitter or Facebook, as a freelancer you get much more pressure to be available 24 hours a day. (…) Even in an agency, time pressure is now much more. Of course this takes us to give much less attention to analysis, longer pieces.* (Excerpt from interview with M., a staff correspondent for a major international news agency)

*Fundamentally, we are cheap. Basically, companies aren't paying you a salary, a healthcare, transport, rent… That's what I'm seeing more and more here: an increase reliance on freelance.* (Excerpt from interview with L., a staff journalist working for a major international news agency)

*In order to survive you really need to do a certain amount of stories. So, of course I'm not doing the in-depth investigation I would like. That's a bit frustrating. An investigation for Liberation would be something like 300 euros! So, who the fucking does it? If I stop working, I stop having money. Also, if I get sick I'm in trouble, because I stop working and stop having a salary. Even if my expenses for hospital, let's say, are covered. That can be one of the worries of being a freelancer.* (Excerpt from interview with Stéphanie Braquehais, a freelancer correspondent for RFI and France 24, based in Nairobi)

*Me, I'm a precarious. I don't have as much resources as I would like to do my job. So, in many cases this means the journalist is less prepared or less motivated or able to do his job properly. So, they can end up doing something much quicker, much closer to citizen journalism than to professional journalism.* (Excerpt from interview with José Miguel Calatayud, a freelancer correspondent for El País, based in Nairobi)

*If you're doing plenty of work for different media you may not be doing your best work, it's much more a suffering in order to reach a financial objective. It's a balance: resist financially and have the freedom to do good work.* (Excerpt from interview with Xavier Aldekoa, a freelancer correspondent for La Vanguardia 24, based in Johannesburg)

This precarious socio-economic condition translates into freelance international news reporters' insecure career expectations in journalism, particularly towards a better paid job in the field of Development Communication:

*Maybe still not knowing how much I'll be earning this month, not sure if I'll be able to pay the rent or pay the school fees and knowing that I'll have to go on the road and work my ass off to live. But that's fine for more 10 years, but as soon you get older and tired of it, and then what? I guess I'll do what everyone does which is either to become spokesman for a UN organization, aid agency, ngo or become an academic, or try to get a job in consultancy. I guess that's the future, I'm not sure it's journalism.* (Excerpt from interview with T., a freelancer online news media correspondent)

*There's a natural career jump for many career journalists. In slug we call it «from hack to flack». Because Public Information Officers need to understand how journalists think and work, many organizations such as the UN tend to employ former journalists for PIO work. I mean, the majority of senior spokes people in the UN began their career as a journalist, often with the BBC. The money is good, etc.* (Excerpt from interview with Anthony Morland, journalist working for IRIN News, based in Nairobi)

*I want to stay and live in Africa, but I don't think I'll be doing daily news journalism more than another year or two. It doesn't earn me a living. I'm 35 years old and I can't be earning 60 pounds by work. I still like to see some point in the future I'll still be writing based here in Africa, probably to customers that pay more and that would be in an ideal world big news magazines, such as Harper's, Vanity Fair or any of these things. High ambition, but you have to aim high. The other would be the United Nations' Communication Officers or non-governmental organizations' communication officers. Because they pay very, very well.* (Excerpt from interview with P., a long-standing newspaper correspondent)

*I think I've done it enough. I've been in the profession for almost 14 years. I would like to go to something like Development Communication and it's also an avenue for me to work also with the grassroots. Not talk to them, work with them. You know… when you're working in a mainstream media you're patronizing over them [the audience]. You are giving them ideas, giving views, but are you incorporating their own? I don't think so. I'll be having this desire to go down there and work with the people, on the field, you know… participatory communication. So, pick the idea from the people, help them improving it, instead of giving them ideas. Actually, it should be like yesterday! It's getting long!* (Excerpt from interview with Ruth Nesoba, correspondent for BBC News, based in Nairobi)

*In 10-15 years, I would like to have a job with health insurance while remaining a multimedia journalist (whatever that constitutes at that time). Where, however, is not really up to me.* (Excerpt from interview with Nick Loomis., a freelancer correspondent based in Dakar)

## 7.14. Labor conditions: perceptions on legal protection

International news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa are aware of formal protection rights from a multiple combination of three legal mechanisms. The majority of respondents (N=105; 84.68%) identifies as the most relevant protection the constitutional law of the country where they are based (N=64; 60.95%); the second most commonly identified legal mechanism is professional status law (N=50; 47.62), and third, local or/and international legal assistance (N=15; 14.29%).

Although this formal recognition exists, a survey on international news reporters' perception on effective legal protection reveals relevant signs of uncertainty and insecurity.

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "I feel legally protected from possible judicial issues". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level.

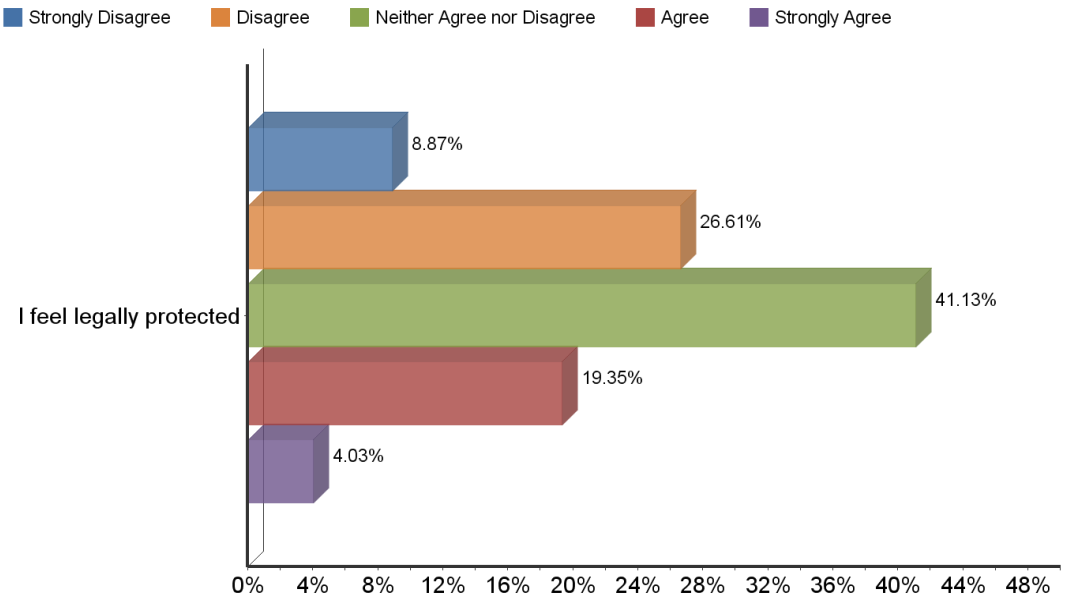


**Figure 31 - Legal protection**

Most respondents (N=51; 41.13%) don't have a well-defined position, they neither agree nor disagree. On the other hand, 33 participants (26.61%) claim not feel safe, disagreeing with the reference sentence and 11 participants (8.87%) strongly disagree with it. The combined result for international news reporters who claim not feeling protected is N=44, 35.48%.

## 7.15. Labor conditions: perceptions on work-family relations

In recent decades a so-called *new economy* emerged and developed based on innovation, flexibility and risk, demanding from workers not only high levels of formal education, but simultaneously a constant quick adaptation to technological changes, transnational competition, productivity demands, and reduced cost of labor (Carnoy, 2000).

International research about the actual human costs in this rising economy is consolidating and supporting the view that emergent labor and employment modes place new demands on other social institutions, such as the family.

With this section we intend to further contribute for the study of the *new economy of journalism,* by presenting findings based on our interviews with international news reporters. These are articulated around two fundamental concepts: the first, *flexibility*, as defined by Carnoy (2000, p. 56), meaning that:

> Work tasks and work time can be constantly adapted to changing products, processes, and markets. This makes workers increasingly autonomous in the work process. Firms demand higher skills, self-programming ability, individual responsibility, and a willingness to follow a flexible schedule and to work longer hours. Firms also reduce the ties that bind the firm to the worker. The goal is a "just-in-time" labor force that allows firms to increase the number of hours (and workers) when demand rises and to reduce hours when demand falls.

The second critical concept is *precarious work*, employed as an operative definition for "uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker", resulting in a variety of distress forms (Kallenberg, 2009, p. 2).

In this context, these *distress forms* will be considered in relation with work-family imbalances in the life of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on their self-narratives as an entry stance for the study of working time and work-family conflict. We are aware that focusing on *families* – rather than on *individuals* – is also a potentially fruitful lens (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004), and that only more integrated view allows the problematization of concepts such as the one of *willing slaves* (Scott, 1994).

Apart from the constraints generated by this *new economy*, a prior word must be given to the more traditional implicit *occupational constraints* for international news reporters: practitioners' usually work abroad, i.e. not in their country of origin, and produce across time zones. These are in fact perceived as fundamental constraints for work-family relations in a "selfish and lonely" occupation, in the words of Rose Skelton, a freelance journalist based in Dakar:

> *I moved here, I was single, free, everything like that, so that's one thing. I think if someone moves here with a family – do I know anyone? - it might be different. You leave your home base to live in a place like Dakar. It depends on what you want from life, but I guess everyone wants to meet somebody and that kind of thing. And it's not easy in a place like Dakar. So, lots of journalists who end up having longest relationships, they don't work, they move on, they move from Dakar and them they move on, then move on… It's very hard to balance personal life and work in this job.* (Excerpt from interview with Fran Blandy, correspondent for Agence France Press, based in Dakar)

> *Coming here alone as a freelancer is terrible if you want to keep friendships or relations back home. I don't know anyone who kept a relationship back at home while doing this.* (Excerpt from interview with Alice Klein, a freelance journalist working in Kenya)

On the other hand, practitioner's perceptions suggest that *financial precarity, flexible schedules* and *long work hours* are also intrinsic to international news reporters' work in contemporary economy of journalism, and that these labor characteristics are a source of further work-family imbalances. Let´s first consider perceptions on the impact of *financial precarity:*

> *If you don't have a family, you are not scrambling to make ends meat. You are working 100 hours a week, managing multiple strings and clients and it can be a real pain, but if you don't mind working really hard and be called anytime, you may not be hired but it's not difficult to make a living.*
>
> ***Do you think it would me much harder if you wanted to settle down with a family here?***

*Absolutely. If I am at the place I am now, if I decided to start a family, it would be a much more difficult situation.* (Dialogue excerpt from interview with Alan Boswell, McClatchy newspapers' correspondent based in Nairobi)

*At some time I would like to have some stability. I'm 31 years now, at some point I would like to have children. Now I couldn't. (…) So, if things keep this way, at some point I will have to do a choice between personal life and professional life, because there's a clash.* (Excerpt from interview with José Miguel Calatayud, a freelancer correspondent for El País, based in Nairobi)

*When I come to think in having kids and keeping this life, it would be very hard moneywise. (*Excerpt from interview with Stéphanie Braquehais, a freelancer correspondent for RFI and France 24, based in Nairobi)

Let´s now observe international news reporters' perceptions on the impact of *flexible schedules* and *long work hours* on work-family relations*:*

*It's not easy and it's one of the main challenges of this job, trying to find moments when you can take care of your family.* (Excerpt from interview with Laurent Correau., correspondent for RFI, based in Dakar)

*At a certain stage I would like to get married. I'm 35 now, I would like to start a family and I don't think I would be able to do it with the long hours that you make heading a bureau.* (Excerpt from interview with N., a television journalist)

*There is something that always played on my mind. I look to all those who I consider to be the best foreign correspondents, the males, they're all philanderers. You know what I mean? They're all in their third or fourth marriage. And it's for a reason: this is an inherently selfish career fi you want to be at the top level. Because you are on the road all time, you are obsessed with the story the all-time. It's a very competitive career and I'm not a cut-throat guy. It goes back to the question: Is it possible to be a good family guy and a good foreign correspondent? I don't know.* (Excerpt from interview with L., a staff journalist working for a major international news agency)

## 7.16. Audience perceptions and feedback

Most respondents perceive their primary audience as being international (N=94; 75.81%); a minority of participants perceive it as domestic and/or regional (N=30; 24.19%).

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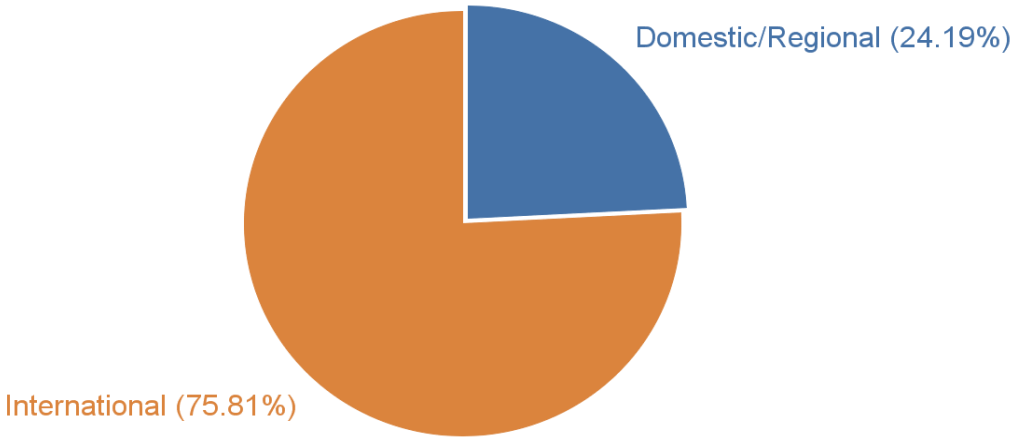


**Figure 32 - Audience perception**

Most respondents claim to receive feedback from their audience (N=113; 91.13%). A majority of 31 respondents (25%) confirms receiving feedback from their audience two to three times a month. Audience feedback frequencies are illustrated by Figure 33.

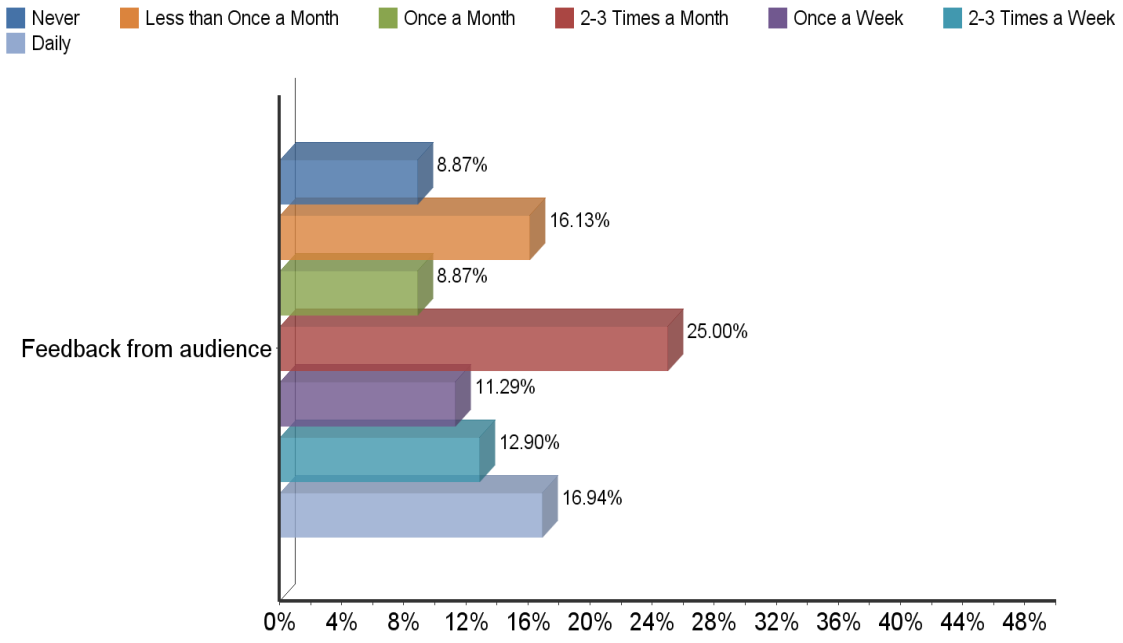


**Figure 33 - Audience feedback frequency**

The combined feedback value of once a week, 2-3 times a week, and daily is of 51 respondents (41.13%): this is a critical percentage of international news reporters dealing, at least once a week, with their audience's feedback. We reasonably admit that this finding clearly exposes an emergent feature of networked journalism: the structuring participation of the public in newswork and, more specifically, its commentary role on news content.

Interviews with international news reporters also indicated a perception towards a repositioning process regarding audience feedback within the sphere of online journalism, particularly directed to a perceived blurring distinction between professionals and non-professional news actors:

> *In the old days, a newspaper was a newspaper. And if you were an audience member and had something to talk about, the newspaper was closed, you couldn't get in there. And so there was a clear divide: it was on the newspaper, it was done by professional journalists. Then came the Internet, the bloggers, and the bloggers or these guys who just have opinions on stuff they talk in the Internet. But now the professional media has migrated to the Internet as well. There is no clear distinction between who is a professional journalist, who is a citizen journalist, who is a blogger, who is a crazy guy who's just talking shit at home, living in his mom's basement, watching TV all day and you can't tell who these people are. So I think that the distinction between professional journalists and everyone else is eroding. And that's worrying because you Google «Guinea Bissau, President, Dead». It's hard to tell: is this coming from a newspaper, a source that should be trusted or is it coming from a guy who has his own motivations? How do you tell? Everything exists in the same platform. Clearly citizen journalism has a role to play, but it needs to be clear what they are, who they are.* (Excerpt from interview with T., a freelancer online news media correspondent)

## 7.17. Newsgathering routines: beats

Most respondents perceive their news beat as being closer to one of general assignment (N=94; 75.81%); a minority of participants perceive it as being closer to one of a specialist (N=30; 24.19%).

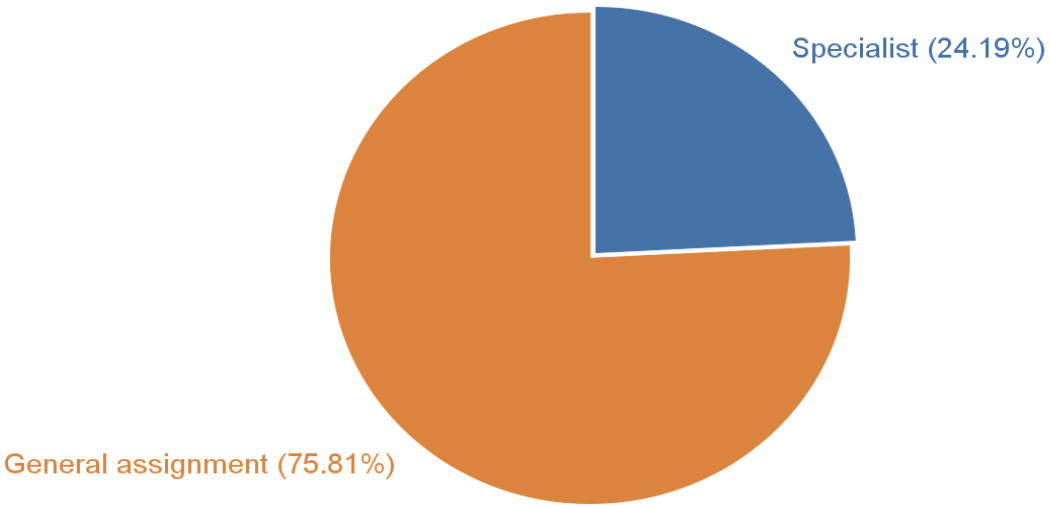


**Figure 34 - Perceptions on news beats**

This finding consolidates international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa as a non-specialist field in the topical sense studied by Tunstall (1971).

## 7.18. Newsgathering routines: competition

International news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa is a considerably competitive field of work.

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "When covering an event, I feel I'm competing with other international news reporters". We surveyed participants' perception using a five points frequency scale. An exact same proportion of respondents claim to always (N=38; 31.40%) or sometimes (N=38; 31.40%) feel in competition, followed by those who claim to feel it very often (N=23; 19.01%). The combined value is of 99 respondents (81.81%).

Complementarily, we decided to survey international news reporters on how they use other journalists' work to assess the quality of their own work and how they perceive the use of other journalists' work by their own supervisors.

The following sentences were presented to the respondents: "Other journalists' is used by me to assess the quality of my work" and "Other journalists' work is used by my supervisors to assess the quality of my work". We used the same five points frequency scale. The complete findings from these three questions are represented in Figure 35.

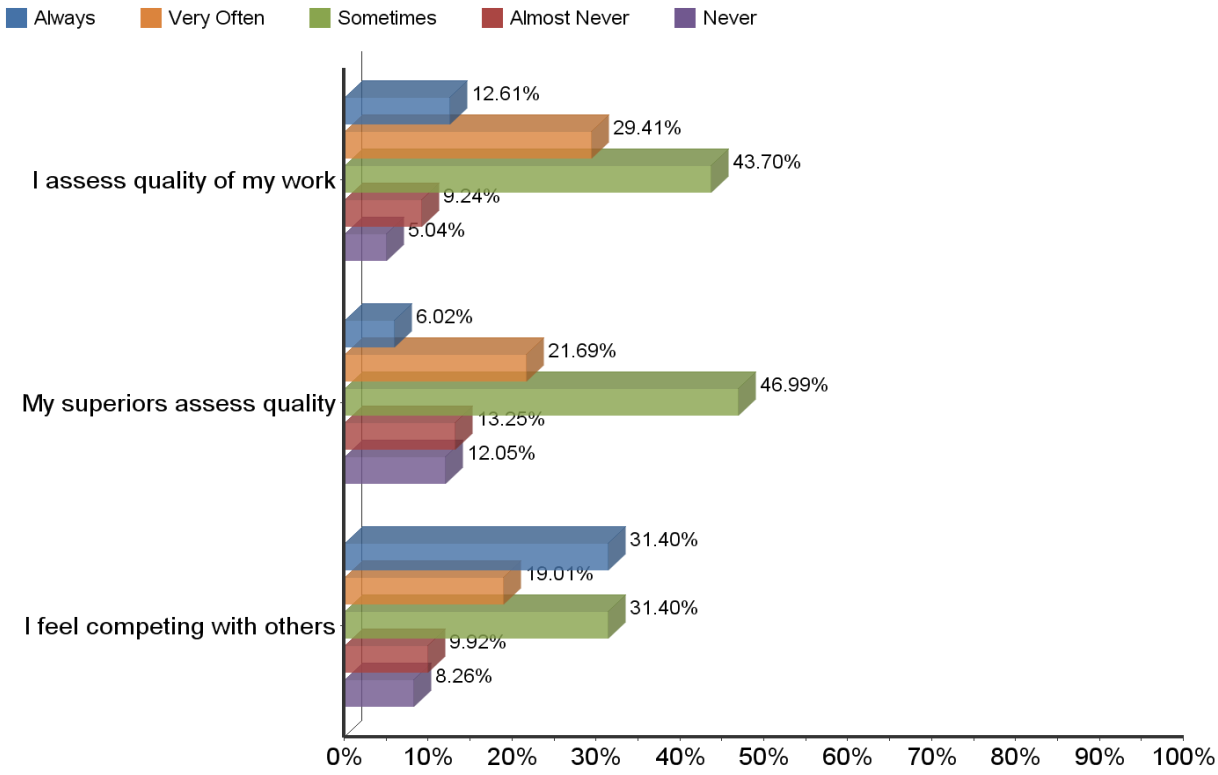


**Figure 35 - Perceptions on competition**

Finally, and since previous research had revealed competition among team members (A Team/B Team), we surveyed international news reporters on how they perceive their relation with their team members: none consider it to be one typical of adversaries (0%) and just a minority perceive it as a negotiation between two parties (N=5; 4.03%). Most participants claim to perceive their relation with team members as one typical of friends (N=66; 53.23%), followed by those who characterize it as a neutral exchange between two colleague parties (N=53; 42.74%).

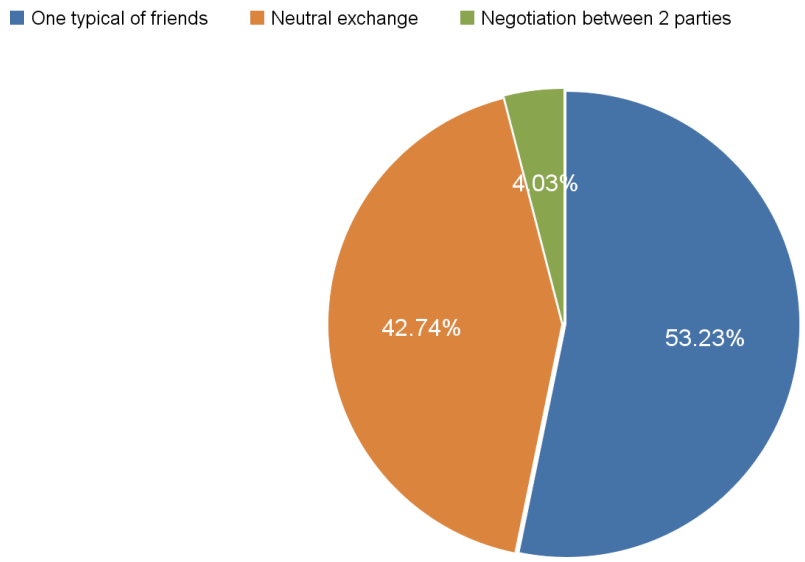


**Figure 36 - Relation with team members**

Interviews with international news reporters revealed six emerging sub-themes with regard to competition. The first, *the rise of local African media as direct competition*, as best illustrated by Laurent Correau, RFI correspondent based in Dakar:

> *The great challenge for [my news media] in Africa is the professionalization of the local media. In the past we were working in a media landscape where the local media were not really developed. We were there, we were leading, but with the development of private media in all French speaking Africa, well… not all, but in some countries, it creates an important concurrency for us. As an example, in Senegal, twenty years back we were one of the main radio in the country, maybe the first or the second. Now in the radio landscape we are on the 5th or 6th place, because the local private media are the ones who are listened by the Senegalese. And more e and more they are trying to report on what's happening in the neighboring countries. The main Senegalese radio is broadcasting more and more on Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Guinea, so it creates for us a frontal concurrency. We are more and more working in the same kind of stories, in the same kind of topics. The competition is increasing and it's just the beginning.*

The second emerging sub-theme, as previously analyzed in a separated chapter, is composed by *the rise of non-professional (Pro-Am) news production*, here synthetized by Anthony Morland, journalist working for IRIN News, based in Nairobi:

> *In the the old days information flowed from on direction, from the wise journalist to the public, and there were no way to penetrate that information flow. Occasionally, you could be critique, but you couldn't get in there. Now you can.*

Third, *the rise of social media platforms as a renewed stage for competition amongst professionals:*

> *I see lots of wire guys putting things on Twitter even before the story is confirmed and I think "That's interesting". That sense of competition and Twitter is free.* (Excerpt from interview with M., a staff correspondent for a major international news agency)

Fourth, a competition regarding *monetization of content:*

> *I am in part skeptical of social media like Twitter, because I think much of the value of the content created by journalists on those platforms is retained by the site itself, rather than forwarded to the media company that employs the reporter.* (Excerpt from interview with PM., a reporter for a business media company based in South Africa)

> *Twitter it's a commercial website, if* RFI *pays me to tweet, ok, fine. They use a lot of information provided by journalists who have good reputation for commercial views and I don't like that. I think it's not right: we bring content and information and that costs a price. So I just tweet my content that has been officially published.* (Excerpt from interview with Sophie Ribstein, RFI correspondent in South Africa)

Fifth, the competition between *staffers and freelancers*, intensely expressed by Alice Klein, a freelancer journalism working in Kenya, and already found by Morrison and Tumber (1985).

> *I found some hostility from the full-time correspondents based in Nairobi, who don't want a new freelancer coming to their patch and pitching ideas from their patch. (…) For me, the strongest relations have been with other freelancers and I was expecting them to be the biggest competition, but actually they understand you the most. (…) They understand the challenges and there's this rule that you don't steal each other's stories, an unwritten rule, you don't steal ideas. I feel like sometimes with agencies' reporters or staff they tell*

*you "Oh yeah, I was doing a story on that" and you just know they are lying and you ask "And what research have you done, what contacts do you have?" and they have no idea. And you can clearly see "Oh, that's a good idea. My editor will be mad if I don't cover that". It's been really surprising that the freelancers have been friendlier and it's the fulltime correspondents often… not replying to your emails, not picking your calls, and then you speak to other people and you know they are around. And then you run into them and you can tell by the way they react. It's these codes, not even arguments, but sometimes body language.*

Sixth, the growing competition between *newcomers* to international news reporting:

*Journalism schools are now turning out so many graduates, it's so fiercely competitive. When you go to war zones, and I saw this in Libya, there are people in their twenties who have just turned up, technology has lowered the bars, they can take the photos and send them back, which is great for them and some are brilliant, some may get killed for not having the proper training. So it's a worry, the survival of the fittest.* (Excerpt from interview with David Smith, The Guardian correspondent in South Africa)

## 7.19. Newsgathering routines: activities

Respondents were asked to order items (rank 10 predefined activities and one open option) from most to less frequent, regarding purpose of use of the Internet. Since multiple combinations were possible in a universe of 124 participants in the survey, we identified the most frequent purpose of use within the corresponding position in the rank (Borda count).

This method determines the level of consensus on a choice, i.e. the broadly acceptable newsgathering activities. Since the Borda count determines "the winner" by giving each option a certain number of points corresponding to the position in which it appears (10 points for #1 in Rank, 9 points for #2 in Rank, 8 point for #3 in Rank, and so on) it is possible to see an option with more votes (number of answers) in a lower rank position "to loose" for an option in a higher position in rank with fewer votes. The final ranking is presented in Table 16.

| Rank# | Newsgathering activity | Points |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Face-to-face interview with the "average" citizen / non-institutional sources | 310 |
| **2** | Face-to-face interview with officials / institutional sources | 288 |
| **3** | Emailing sources | 240 |
| **4** | Data mining from databases | 200 |
| **5** | Document research | 180 |
| **6** | Consulting other news media | 160 |
| **7** | Press conferences | 152 |
| **8** | Official press releases | 140 |
| **9** | News web clipping | 116 |
| **10** | Online social networks | 63 |

**Table 16 - Newsgathering activities rank**

In order to capture other newsgathering activities used by international news reporters across Sub-Saharan Africa we provided a eleventh response option (an open answer as #11 in Rank), designated as "other"; 14 respondents (11.29%) decided to specify their eleventh most common newsgathering activity: field reporting (N=5; 4.03%), telephone interviews (N=5; 4.03%), radio listening (N=1; 0.81%), use of news agencies (N=1; 0.81%), photographing (N=1; 0.81%), and leaks from official and non-official sources (N=1; 0.81%).

These findings support previous research evidence towards *a strategic fusion (convergence)* of traditional newsgathering practices and tools with digital media (McClure & Middleberg, 2010). They also support previous findings towards an *inter-media agenda setting* (Chen, 1995; Golan, 2006), with foreign correspondents consulting other news media (position 6 in rank) as a newsgathering activity.

On the other hand, they reveal objective basis for *seated journalism*, particularly objectified by the email (position 3 in rank) and other computer-aided research.

## 7.20. Online social networks: relevance and purpose of use

Although online social networks are ranked in a low position regarding current frequency of use in newsgathering, the surveyed international news reporters tend to perceive them as a relevant platform.

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "Online social networks are a relevant newsgathering platform for international news reporting". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level. Results are represented in Table 17.

A majority of 68 respondents (54.84%) – the combination of those who agree (N=54; 43.55%) and those who strongly agree (N=14; 11.29%) – perceive online social networks as a relevant newsgathering platform for international news reporting.

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Online social networks are a relevant newsgathering platform for international news reporting. | 1.61% | 10.48% | 33.06% | 43.55% | 11.29% | 124 |

**Table 17 - Perceptions on online social networks' relevance for newsgathering**

These findings were further stretched by the interview process. Findings complement recent research (Cozma, 2012) by suggesting that among international news reporters in Sub-Saharan Africa online social networks, particularly Facebook and Twitter, are emerging:

a) ***As monitoring tools for news-uptake and story ideation.*** In the words of Eva-Lotta Jansson, a freelance photographer based in Johannesburg, online social networks are "a way of knowing what is going on in a very immediate basis to then follow up I find out more about it". In this respect, continues Eva-Lotta, "If I follow other journalists and they are saying «I found this and this person wrote a really good story on this issue» then instead of reading ten newspapers I find a good one to read. So, I think that probably affects your news uptake."

Among international news reporters online social networks are praised by their ability to *expand access to information*. Twitter is particularly celebrated by its *speed*. "I think in terms of access of information Twitter is invaluable. It's now my second news source after the wires. But having telling you that I can't say I've got amazing stories out of it", states P., a long-standing newspaper correspondent.

Particularly for story ideation, online social networks are *pushing for distinctive approaches* by professional journalists in news production routines. "If something happens at 3 o´clock, which is very late for television, chances are it has been sent by SMS, it has been tweeted and facebooked by so many people they all know the story. You have now the challenge to come with a different angle to the story, to make it relevant", says N., a television journalist. "Otherwise you sound just like everybody else. So, TV's are struggling to stay relevant".

Nick Loomis, a freelancer correspondent based in Dakar, also underlines this potential for *news story research*: "I really only use social media and citizen journalism in the research phase of my reporting. If I'm stuck, I'll search for leads and tips, then verify", he explains.

**b) *As newsgathering tools.*** Online social networks are in the epicenter of a tension between *occupational protectionism* and *innovation in newsgathering*. Professionalism as boundary-work (epistemological regime and accountability system) is present as a strategic way to safeguard modern news culture. This position is vividly clarified by Adam Nossiter, The New York Times' correspondent based in Dakar:

*I don't use it. I'm very old school. I started in the pre-Internet era. Of course I use the Internet, but I don't pay any attention at all to social media. I don't use it, I don't know how to use it, and it doesn't interest me. For me, the work of the reporter is to do it yourself, to gather the information yourself: to make the phone calls yourself, to be on the ground yourself. I have stringers in places that I don't know, but essentially I do the work myself. I don't think it is proper for a reporter to gather unverified material from websites, social media. I don't use it at all.*

Complementarily, "It's good to have it as a tip of. I would never use Wikipedia as a source", declares Katherine Houreld, The Associated Press correspondent based in Nairobi. "You can get something from Wikipedia but immediately get in touch with people who can verify that fact. Just because there's a free flow of information

it doesn't mean it is accurate or it is not biased. You can't rely on freely generated citizen content, because there's no consequence for getting it wrong.", she argues.
For these *legacy defenders,* non-digital media are kept as their fundamental basis for story ideas, as in the case of David Smith, The Guardian correspondent based in South Africa:

*I still buy six South African newspapers daily, and I read them, have the TV on. I pitch stories that appear in the print edition of The Guardian and so there's something that hasn't change. Unlike other journalists I spend more time reading newspapers than reading blogs. I still have a streak of old-fashioned Fleet Street.*

Despite skepticism, it is now "getting more and more acceptable" to quote sources directly from Twitter, says M., a staff correspondent for a major international news agency. "Two years ago you wouldn't quote. It would be harder to quote Twitter as a source, especially from official spokesmen".
Currently, online social networks are emerging as particularly useful for *sourcing*, i.e. "an important source of news", states Guy Henderson, CCTV correspondent in Johannesburg.
"You read about someone, you look at the Internet, you can't find. Often you find them on Facebook or LinkedIn, you just send them a message «Be my friend» or «Be my contact»", explains Ilona Eveleens, correspondent for TROUW, TAZ and N-24 based in Nairobi.
Ruth Nesoba, correspondent for BBC News, based in Nairobi, shares her own direct experience: "The story in which I was working today was seen in a blog. So, the blogger alerted us to that fact. We interviewed him. These web citizens are proving to be very important sources for news and the outputs that we have."
In this scope, Twitter is regarded as potentially promoting a *multiperspectival newsgathering.* In South-Africa-based freelancer correspondent Eve Fairbanks' terms, it's a "kind of a 3D commentary: foreign journalists, local journalists and academics", she states. "What Twitter can do because of the *hashtag,* you can get a sort of feed of commentary and ideas that both include traditional journalists' contributions but also commentators".
L., a staff journalist working for a major international news agency, exemplifies how this emerging practice is currently remodeling organizational news routines. "We have a role in the office that we call «slot» and it is basically the day's editor. This

role is also responsible for the news calls of the day, kind of a safety net. And we need to monitor Twitter. We increasingly get tips out of Twitter, just from reading the dialogue, we learn a lot from it. For instance, sometimes we see Al Shabaab talking about an air raid. We call our guys in Mogadishu and ask them to do their own checks."

Although, this emergent newsgathering procedure it's not immune to some criticism towards *seated journalism*. "You can easily spend a whole day monitoring information and never write a new story", alerts Alan Boswell, the McClatchy Newspapers' correspondent based in Kenya. "The information flowing is huge. I think it must be assumed that we need multiple levels of filtering. You can't be doing investigative journalism and being monitoring social media. It's impossible at all, at least to do it well and I don't think there's this recognition right now on attention." Alan observes this challenge in the light of his own experience while reporting from the Nuba Mountains:

*One thing I was noticing when I was in South Sudan. I did some stories on the Nuba, but it was having little attention in Twitter and the guy to follow as a guy seated in NY, who had did a lot of work in Sudan and had some contacts. That I find annoying but also instructive. If people really rely on Twitter for their news – I don't know if people really are, or if the media elite is relying on Twitter… There's a great discrimination in the media on who is using and who is not using the media. If someone is a regular user, even if it is not on the ground, they're really more interested in promoting that person rather than promoting local news stories.*

Alan's story is reinforced by a vignette shared by Anthony Morland, a journalist working for IRIN News, based in Nairobi:

*There's a famous case in Darfur, while a back, where lot of people were quoting refugees' representative in Darfur as a source. No one has actually met him, but emailed to him. Gradually one realized that this guy doesn't even exist. It was a creation of the public information machine of one of the rebel leaders, who was caring about the media.*

The personal experience of David Lewis, staff correspondent for Reuters, based in Dakar, also illustrates this concern regarding *fact-checking*: "I was in Congo last year during the elections. It was quiet useful but also very dangerous, because the Congolese diaspora on Twitter was very, very aggressively anti-Kabila, but they're

online in Brussels and in Paris. It doesn't mean that they have any information, but they are tweeting «this is happening» and then you find that this is someone seated in Brussels tweeting".

As Senegal-based photojournalist Rebecca Blackwell summarizes it: "The problem is the trust and being able to verify the sourcing", particularly if as considered by Laurent Correau (RFI) "One of the dangers is to be taken completely out of the field by this kind of networking."

**c) *As platforms for community-building and interaction with audience.*** International news reporters recognize that new ways of interacting with their audiences are emerging. Our informants, like Samba Badji, BBC's correspondent in Dakar, are particularly aware that:

*With Facebook and Twitter the interaction with our audience is growing bigger. In previous years this would be done by SMS but just from one side and it was used in just a small slot in some programs. There was no interaction between the listeners [and viewers] themselves, no conversation. They send, you read. Now, with Facebook when you post a text, an information or put a story online in our Facebook profile, the listeners or the viewers comment and we have the possibility to tell them "In this story we say this because…" and there's also a chat between the viewers themselves.*

The rising of this *conversational* or *dialogical mode* in journalism in which "audience is following us and actually sending friend invitations", adds Thomas Fessy, also working for BBC based in Senegal, is paving the floor for a more *collaborative agenda-setting*. This *networked journalism*, says Geoffrey York, The Globe and Mail correspondent from South Africa:

*It's a great way to build a community and learn from that community. For example, I was just in Goma for a week and I created a list in Twitter with people I know are useful in Congo and Rwanda. Some people are Congo experts based in the U.S. or in the U.K. or journalists who were based in Nairobi or here and happened to going in. For that week, before and after, it's good to have a list where you just push one button and get all the latest information, some it's useful, some it's not. I included people who were ideological too, so pro-Kagami people, and anti-Kagami people tweeting. I would not necessarily quote them but it's still useful to know what they're saying.*

Complementarily, this emerging trend also means journalists can now reach audiences usually estranged from their traditional news media. "What I really like in

Facebook", explains Eve Fairbanks, freelance correspondent based in South Africa, "is reaching an audience that I wouldn't have reach just by writing to these magazines".

d) ***As barometers for competition awareness.*** International news reporters perceive online social networks as a reinforcement of competition in networked journalism. "Things like Twitter have made this 24 hour newsroom goes virtual and global", states Alice Klein, freelance reporter based in Nairobi. "Everyone is trying to tweet news before everyone else, regardless where you are in the world, a kind of competitiveness".

This shared perception leads professional journalists to a renewed competition intelligence, illustrated by Alan Boswell (McClatchy Newspapers) account: "I rather prefer to keep one information for my story than give a tip on Twitter to someone else who may also working on the story", he says. "I guess it has to do with my competitiveness: probably no one else would be reading it besides my colleague foreign correspondents, so actually I would be giving them a preview on my story."

Our interviews suggest that journalists tend to follow one another in online social networks, tendentiously as a strategic ritual towards online peer scrutiny.

"If I'm somewhere like Goma", describes David Smith, The Guardian correspondent in South Africa, "and it's a moving story, Twitter feeds that I look at are generally the kind «what is the New York Times correspondent saying? What's the Reuters correspondent saying?». Journalists are on the ground and I often look at than before look at citizen journalists."

e) ***As a reporting and recording tool.*** For international news reporters, online social networks are sometimes useful as a first and quick *news draft*. "You often see people recycling their tweets as their leads or lines in their stories", tells Anita Powell, correspondent for The Associated Press in Johannesburg. "It's really a great way of distilling your ideas into nice, deliverable, punchy little nuggets." In this sense, online social networks function as a kind of *in the cloud prompt notepad*. "I like its immediacy", says David Smith (The Guardian), "and often I'm tweeting things that frankly I would never write about in the paper with its limited space. So, as a journalist you feel you can still communicate and record."

### 7.21. Newsgathering routines: sources

In our interviews a critical theme emerged regarding international news reporters relations with news sources: the sometimes dubious relations between journalists and actors from the – in practitioners' terms – *aid industry*, particularly non-governmental organizations and international organizations, especially the U.N.

Per se, this theme deserves further attention and empirical study from researchers. In this section we document the expressive answers to our questions by, respectively, Katherine Houreld (AP), Alan Boswell (McClatchy Newspapers), both based in Nairobi, and L. an international news reporter whose anonymity is preserved:

> *I feel there's definitely an incestuous relationship between journalists and aid agencies: we take free flights from then, we take quotes from them, we print their reports without outside opinion over them… Would you do that with a company? Even with a government? Would you take free flights from a Government? Print exactly what the spokesman told you? No way! And yet because they supposedly mean good, that seems like to be a good enough reason to quote them. I totally disagree with that. I think journalists are smarting it up a little bit, but there's definitely an overly cozy relationship between journalists, the UN and other aid agencies.*
>
> ***And why do you think that happens?***
>
> *It's easier. Maybe it's a fear of losing access, maybe it's also because you need to know the context, and maybe because everyone likes to start drinking gin and tonics at 5 o'clock. Yes, there's definitely an overreliance on aid agencies and I felt that very early on my reporting.*

Alan Boswell, the McClatchy Newspapers correspondent, reinforces this perception, critically describing aid industry gatekeepers within the boundaries of *professional retaliation:*

> *The truth is that if you write stories that are critical to UN missions on peacekeeping they can be rather vindictive, not to be helpful, and sometimes they are the only ones who can fly you to an area. This is not something journalists talk a lot but they are lying if they say they didn't think before writing a story about the aid industry and UN missions and that they have on the back of their heads going to some places like Somalia or South Sudan or the DRC. All these troubled spots, if the aid agencies and the UN that are on the ground are not helping you, then you are in trouble.*

This apparent dynamic towards a *win-win* relation – international news reporters *win access*, aid agencies *win dedicated coverage* – is further problematized by L.:

> *Aid agencies and the UN often guarantee free access. I mean… I made two trips to Southern Somalia and they were both with the UN: Because you are pretty confident that the security will be good, and they will fly you for free. And you know, in the end of the day costs are an increasingly constraint in this industry. And I didn't feel the obligation to write about what UN is doing, but probably I did have kind of a moral duty just to get them a mention somewhere. I think the relationship between journalists and NGOs is quite a blurred one. But the other thing is: These NGOs are on the ground, they are good sources. For instance, International Committee of the Red Cross has a very strong presence in South Somalia, more than anyone else. So, if you can manage to have a relation that is for our benefit. There is a legitimate cause for a relationship there, but also we are cynical bastards, we the media. It's so easy to go NGO bash. I mean, I'm very cynical on what goes within the NGOs' world and how development is a self-serving business. That for me is very clear. And there's space for more reporting on that. So, aren't we doing it because we need to use them? I think there's a little bit of that. But also, it's just this business model.*

# CHAPTER 8 – CITIZEN MEDIA WORKERS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

In the scope of this study, a non-random sample of citizen media workers was surveyed (N=11; 8.87%), constituted by Global Voices Online – Sub-Saharan Africa group members. It is not a statistically representative sample (too small) of the citizen media workers' population, being insufficient in order to extrapolate the results to make generalizations about a larger group.

Although, since no comprehensive study is available on the realities of these actors in Sub-Saharan Africa, we consider these preliminary findings for publication having in mind an exploratory approach to the emerging characteristics of this specific field within international news reporting from the continent. This chapter presents research outcomes concerning socio-demographics, news culture and news work of citizen media workers based in seven different countries, as shown in Table 18.

| Country | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Ethiopia | 1 | 9.09% |
| France | 1 | 9.09% |
| Ghana | 2 | 18.18% |
| Kenya | 2 | 18.18% |
| Nigeria | 1 | 9.09% |
| USA | 2 | 18.18% |
| Zimbabwe | 2 | 18.18% |
| **TOTAL** | 11 | 100 |

**Table 18 - Citizen media workers country base**

Using Global Voices Online – Sub-Saharan Africa group members as a convenient sample implied the implicit condition that some of their contributors are not physically on the ground (N=3; 27.27%), presented as "an international community of bloggers who report on blogs and citizen media from around the world".

## 8.1. Socio-demographics

This section will answer two questions:

**RQ1**: Who are the citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa, concerning: age, sex, years of experience in citizen media, years of experience in international news reporting, years of experience in current post, main area of education, and level of education?

**RQ2**: Who are the citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa, concerning: number of organizations they work for, function in news work, number of team members, and type of team members?

### 8.1.1. Age

Results suggest that the citizen media field within international news reporting is mostly composed by young adults. Most respondents (N=5; 45.45%) have between 23 and 32 years old. The youngest participant has 27 years old; the two eldest have 43 years old. Age composition is illustrated by Figure 37.

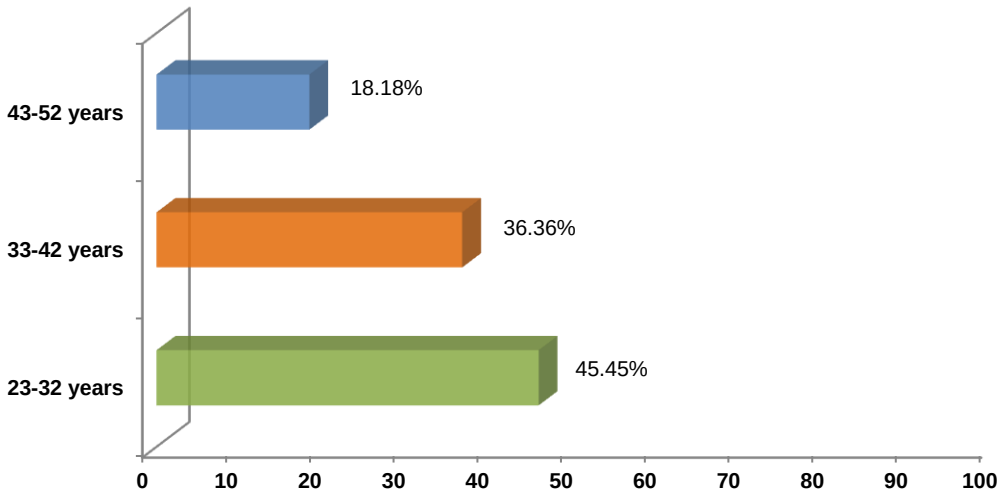


**Figure 37 - Citizen media workers' age composition**

### 8.1.2. Sex

All surveyed citizen media workers are male (N=11; 100%), as illustrated by Figure 38.

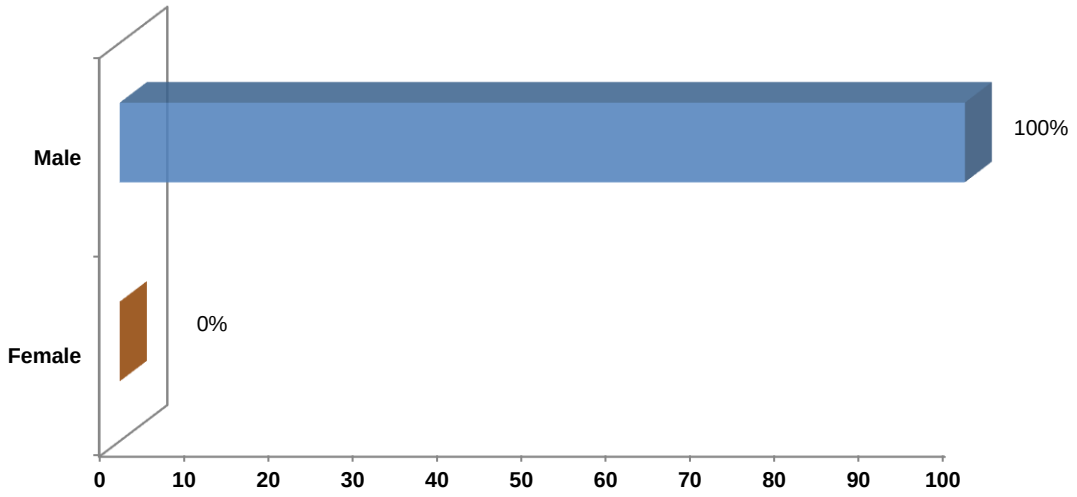


**Figure 38 - Citizen media workers' sex composition**

### 8.1.3. Years of experience in citizen media work

Most surveyed citizen media workers in international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa (N=6; 54.55%) have five years of experience or less, as showed in Figure 39.

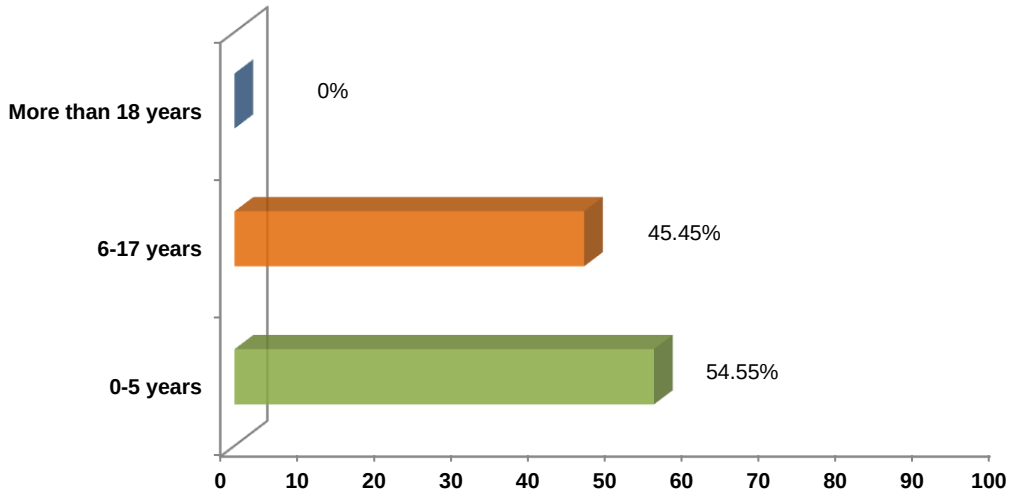


**Figure 39 - Citizen media workers' years of experience**

### 8.1.4. Years of experience in international news reporting

Most surveyed citizen media workers (N=7; 63.64%) have five years of experience or less in international news reporting, as showed by Figure 40.

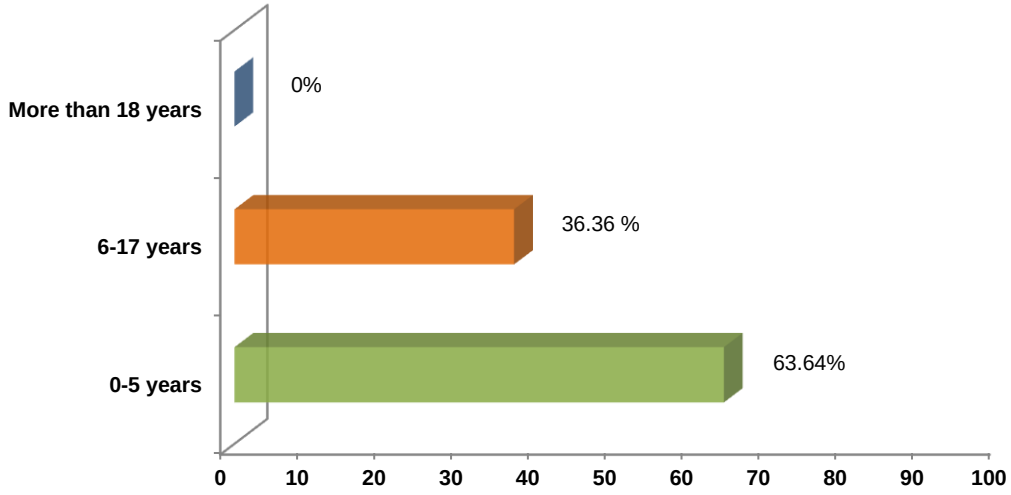


**Figure 40 - Citizen media workers' years of experience in international news reporting**

### 8.1.5. Years of experience in current post

Most surveyed citizen media workers (N=8; 72.73%) have five years of experience or less in their current post in international news reporting, as showed by Figure 41.

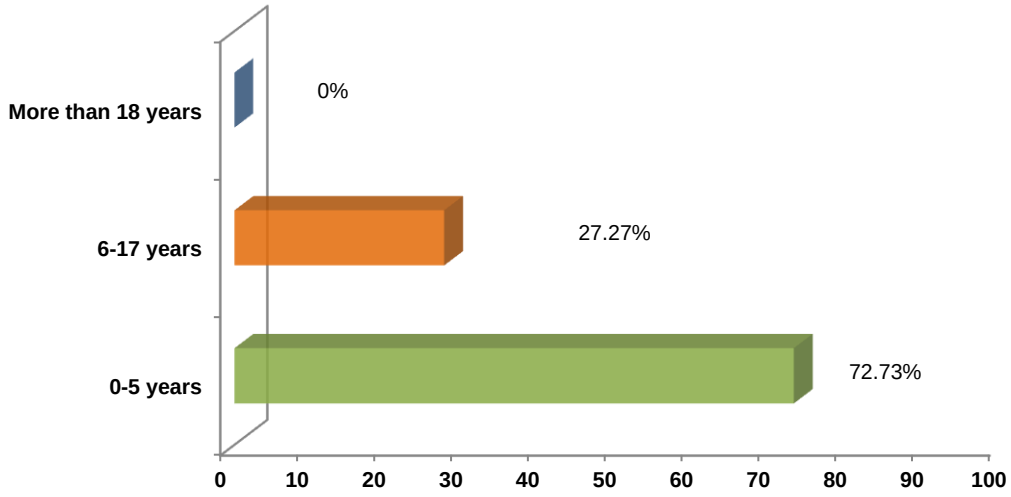


**Figure 41 - Citizen media workers' years of experience in current post**

### 8.1.6. Main area of education

Four fixed areas of education were presented to the respondents: Humanities/Social Sciences, Law/International Relations, Natural Sciences/Engineering, and Economics/Management. One open-ended option was available (Other). The majority of the surveyed citizen media workers (N=4; 36.36 percent) choose this last option: One person didn't specified his answer, the other three identified Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Technology and Journalism and Mass Communication.

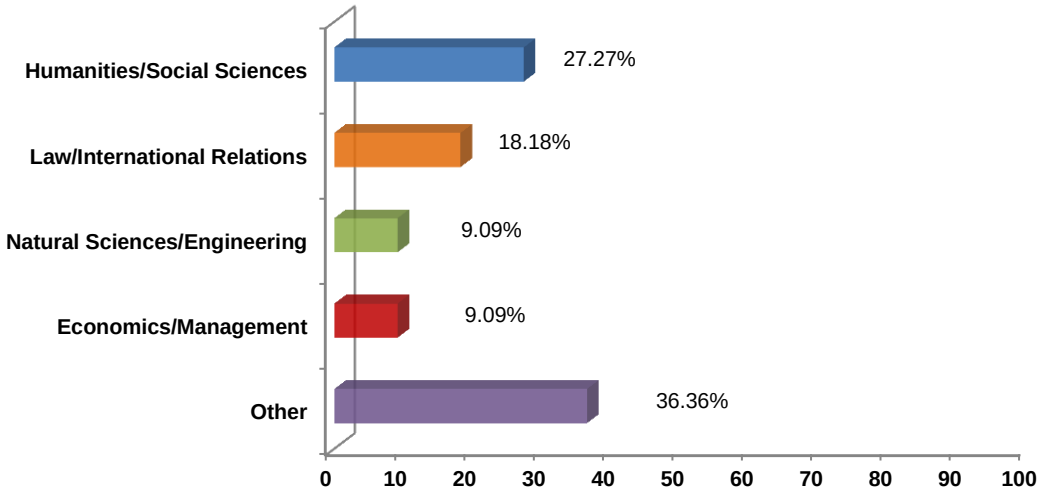


**Figure 42 - Citizen media workers' main area of education**

### 8.1.7. Level of education

The majority of the surveyed citizen media workers (N=7; 63.64%) has a Bachelor's degree. A Master's degree is held by 27.27 (N=3) and a Doctorate by 9.09 percent (N=1) of the respondents.

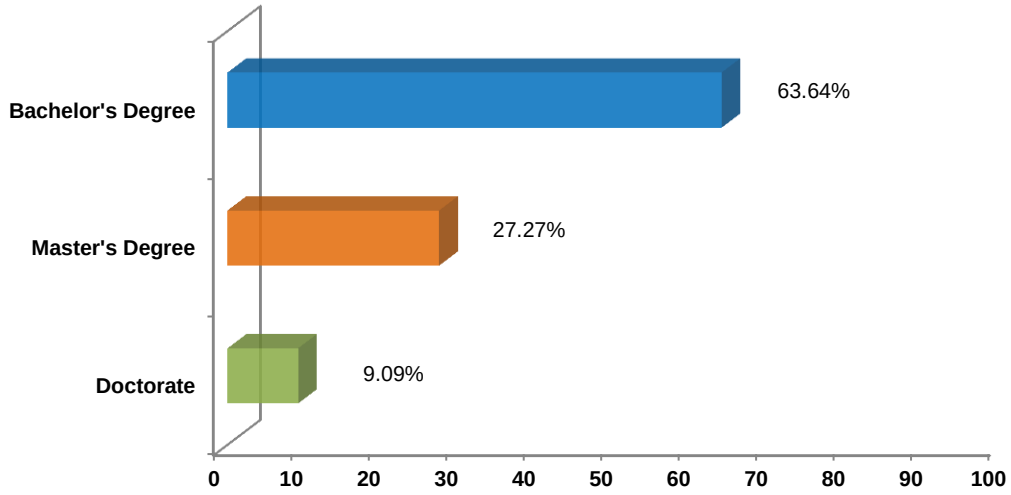


**Figure 43 - Citizen media workers' level of education**

### 8.1.8. Number of organizations citizen media workers work for

Most respondents (N=5; 45.45 percent) to this survey work for three or more news organizations, as illustrated in Figure 44.

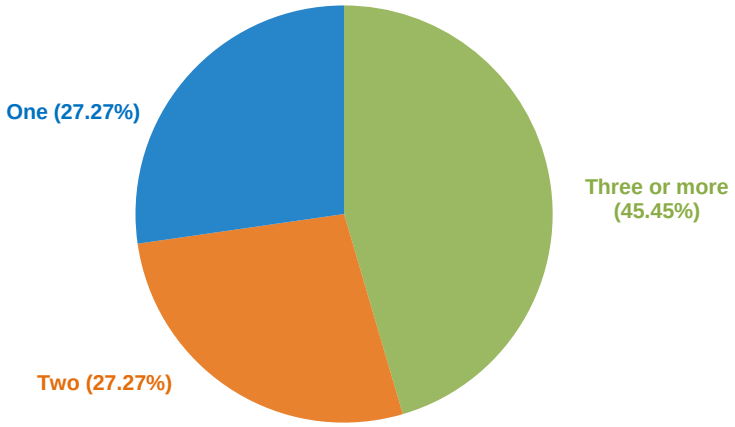


**Figure 44 - Number of organizations citizen media workers work for**

### 8.1.9. Number and type of team members

Findings regarding citizen media workers' team composition show that most respondents (N=5; 45.45 percent) are integrated into a team of four or more members. These are followed by three respondents (27.27 percent) who work alone, two (18.18 percent) who work with two other team members and one respondent (9.09 percent) who work with three other people. All respondents (N=11; 100 percent) integrate a freelancer in their team. The remaining typology is represented in Figure 45.

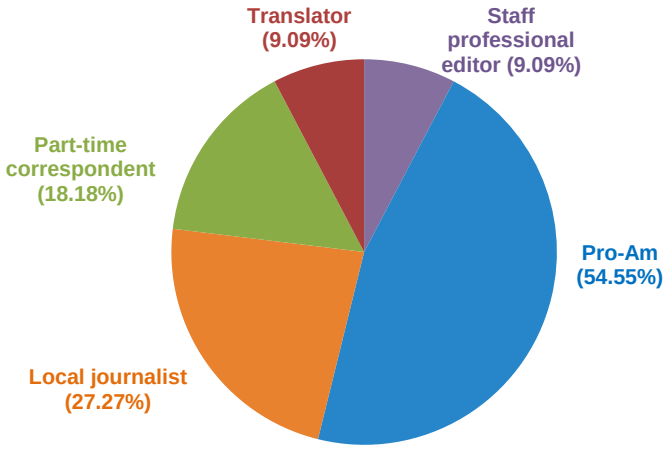


**Figure 45 - Citizen media workers' team typology**

## 8.2. News culture

This section will answer the following questions:

**RQ3:** Do citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa value empiricism, considering original fieldwork and eyewitness?

**RQ4:** Do citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive themselves as cultural translators considering: contribution to society by providing knowledge about distant realities and language fluency?

### 8.2.1 Empiricism: original fieldwork and direct eyewitness

The surveyed citizen media workers highly value original field work and direct eyewitness as the epistemological foundation of their newsgathering routines.

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "In order to be more accurate and reliable, international news reporting must be based on original fieldwork and direct eyewitness". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level. Results are represented in Table 19.

The majority of the citizen media workers who responded to this survey (N=8; 72.73 percent) strongly agrees with the referred sentence.

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In order to be more accurate and reliable, international news reporting must be based on original field work and direct eyewitness . | 9.09% | 0 | 9.09% | 9.09% | 72.73% | 11 |

**Table 19 - Citizen media workers: Original fieldwork and direct eyewitness**

### 8.2.2. Cultural translation: contribution to society and language fluency

Most surveyed citizen media workers consider themselves cultural translators and clearly regard they news work as a relevant contribution to society by providing knowledge about distant realities.

The following sentence was presented to the respondents: "Throughout my work, I make a contribution to society by providing knowledge about distant realities". According to a five levels agree/disagree Likert scale, we asked participants to express their (dis)agreement level. Results are represented in Table 20.

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Throughout my work, I make a contribution to society by providing knowledge about distant realities. | 0 | 0 | 9.09% | 36.36% | 54.55% | 11 |

**Table 20 - Citizen media workers: Contribution to society**

Regarding language fluency, most respondents claim to be fluent in 2-3 languages (N=8; 72.73 percent), followed by those who only speak their native language (N=1; 9.09 percent) and finally by the citizen media workers who are fluent in four or more languages (N=2; 18.18 percent).

## 8.3. Newswork

This section will answer summarily to the following questions:

**RQ5:** Are citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa globally connected concerning: Internet access and its frequency?

**RQ6:** Do citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive Internet as benefiting the overall quality and quantity of news reporting from the region?

**RQ7:** Do citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa perceive technical preparation as being important in a convergent media environment?

**RQ8:** How do citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa position themselves in networked journalism, concerning: maintenance of a personal weblog and/or website, an active account in one or more online social networks, perception of credibility of information from online social networks and online search engines, participation of public in news work, direct collaboration between journalists and citizens, and ethical standards?

**RQ9**: What are citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa labor conditions, concerning: perception on legal protection?

**RQ10:** What are the most relevant constraints that impend over the news work of citizen media workers across Sub-Saharan Africa, considering: audience perception and feedback, beats, competition, and newsgathering activities.

### 8.3.1. The newswork of citizen media workers in international news reporting across Sub-Saharan Africa

All surveyed citizen media workers (N=11; 100 percent) have access to the Internet in their work space. Most of them (N=6; 54.55 percent) access and use it for more eight hours a day, followed by those who use it between five and seven hours a day (N=4; 36.36 percent) and by one single case whose daily use is of two to four hours (N=1; 9.09 percent).

Most participants (N=10; 90.91 percent) perceive the Internet as benefiting both the overall quality and quantity of international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa: six participants (54.55 percent) strongly agree with this view, four (36.36 percent) agree with it and one respondent (9.09 percent) neither agrees nor disagrees.

All citizen media workers surveyed for this study (N=11; 100 percent) consider that in a convergent media environment (multimedia and cross-platform) it is important to be technically prepared. Also, all respondents consider themselves technically prepared to work in a convergent media environment: The majority strongly agrees with this view (N=6; 54.55 percent) and the remaining five (45.45%) agrees with it.

All respondents maintain a personal weblog and/or website as also all of them maintain an active account in one or more online social networks. Regarding information from online social networks, most surveyed citizen media workers (N=7; 63.64 percent) perceive it as being as credible as any other, followed by those who consider it to be credible (N=2; 18.18%) and not credible (N=2; 18.18%). Most (N=9; 81.82 percent) perceive online social networks as a relevant newsgathering platform for international news reporting.

In the case of information retrieved from online search engines, most also regard it as being as credible as any other (N=7; 63.64 percent), thee others (27.27 percent) regard it as credible and one respondent (9.09 percent) as highly credible.

Results suggest that citizen media workers are clear advocates for a more participative role in news work by the public and consider that direct collaboration between journalists and citizens in news production benefits the overall quality of news reporting: in both questions, N=9; 81.82 percent strongly agrees with it; N=2; 18.18 percent agrees. Also, most respondents agree (N=7; 63.64 percent) or strongly agree (N=3; 27.27 percent)

that new ethical standards are needed in order to adequately adopt user-generated content in news work; one participant in the study (9.09 percent) neither agrees nor disagrees.

A very relevant finding respects perception on legal protection from possible judicial issues concerning their activities in news reporting: most respondents (N=6; 54.55 percent) have an ambiguous perception on the subject (neither agree nor disagree), while two agree that they are protected (18.18 percent), one (9.09 percent) strongly agrees, one (9.09 percent) disagrees and finally one (9.09 percent) strongly disagrees.

Most regard their primary audience as being international (N=7; 63.64 percent) – the remaining perceive it as domestic or regional (N=4; 36.36 percent) and a majority of citizen media workers claims receiving daily feedback from their public (N=5; 45.45 percent).

Surveyed citizen media workers predominantly consider that their news beat is closer to one of a general assignment (N=9; 81.82 percent). Findings regarding self-perceptions on competition are not conclusive: three participants (27.27 percent) claim to sometimes feel competing with other international news reporters when covering an event, two (18.18 percent) state to always feel competing followed by two others (18.18 percent) who feel it very often, one (9.09 percent) who claim almost never feel competing and finally other (9.09 percent) who never feel competing.

# CHAPTER 9 – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This thesis had a three-fold purpose: to explore (a) the socio-demographics, (b) the professional culture, and (c) the newswork of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa, by inspecting long-term trajectories in international journalism combined with short-term developments based on transformations on microelectronics and digitization. This inquiry allowed an updated view on who is actually reporting across the continent, on the occupational cultures in place and on the impending constraints over newsworkers' production routines.

Answers to these questions matter because they cast some light in the contemporary field of journalism, compressed by destructuration-restructuration tensions departing from its material basis but clearly exceeding it. They contribute to the knowledge basis on the actual processes leading to how present-day societies learn and decide about a distant *Other*, previously mis- and/or underrepresented and globally considered within a non-hot spot, while the complex dynamics of globalization suggest today a more cosmopolitan transnational citizenship. By taking in consideration the direct accounts of people involved in these transformative and evolving processes our effort has been to make sense of the *actual realities* towards a post-modernization of social experience: deterritorialized and networked.

Making sense of contemporary international news reporting demands renewed efforts towards in-depth scholar research. One limitation of our study comes directly from its methodological approach: multi-sited research projects need to be complemented and deepened by one-site ethnographies of current journalistic practices. Particularly our contribution to the study of citizen media workers clearly need an adjusted qualitative component and can only be considered as a very exploratory first glimpse of a field of activity demanding much more robust investigation.

This chapter reviews the empirical findings of this thesis, discussing what they suggest about the present and future of international news reporting in a time when it has been rhetorically presented as being redundant and on its way out.

## 9.1. Who is reporting across Sub-Saharan Africa?

The most common contemporary professional correspondent working across Sub-Saharan Africa is a male (68.55%) between 23 and 42 years old (72.51%), with 6 to 17 years of experience in newswork (49.19%), a beginner in international news reporting (52.42%) with a recent experience in the current post (69.35%). He has a higher education degree (77.41%) in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences (68.55%) and works for three or more news organizations (50.81%), frequently for a news agency (30.65%). He is a freelancer (50.81%) often working alone (48.39%) and perceiving himself as a general assignment reporter (75.81%).

This socio-demographic characterization of international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa is consistent with previous research implemented in other geographies of foreign correspondence (Hess, 1996, 2005; Nosaka, 1992), confirming a male-oriented occupational field composed by an educational elite.

This thesis original contribution to international journalism studies comes partially from an exploratory consideration of the emerging activities developed by non-professionals, particularly citizen media organizations such as Global Voices Online. The socio-demographics of this sector are relevant, even if in the scope of the present study they were not developed within a comparative research purpose.

The most common contemporary citizen media worker across Sub-Saharan Africa is a male (100%) between 23 and 32 years old (45.45%), with five years of experience or less in newswork (54.55%), a beginner in international news reporting (63.64%) with a recent experience in current post (72.73%). He has a higher education degree (100%), in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences and works for three or more news organizations (45.45%).

## 9.2. How is international news reporters' culture defined?

Professional international news reporters working across Sub-Saharan Africa highly value empiric research (92.74%), i.e. evidence based on observation and direct experience, as a structuring component of their epistemological regime. Objectivity is *the* guiding principle conforming information collected during fieldwork to *professional* standards.

This epistemological regime and accountability system are strategic factors in their self-definition of journalism as a professional occupation: they not only delineate the validity of the cultural rules and norms that regulate practitioners who are already *within* the occupational boundaries, as they critically define those who shall be kept *outside* the profession. This boundary-work tension defines *journalism identity* as a professional occupation rather than an informal communication activity, and ultimately delineates its societal role as a *task for professionals*.

This *professionalism* is articulated with reference to formal education and training as two mandatory factors in the validation of international news reporters' stock of knowledge, and expressed in terms of consistency and disambiguation.

Although, even if assumed as foundational criterion, contemporary international news reporters' epistemological regime suffers now pressures coming from the evolving tension at its material basis, particularly at the socio-economical, financial and technological levels. In recent years these transformations have been engendering emergent newswork modes, perceived within three distinct interpretative repertoires: resistance, resignation, and renewal (Andén-Papadopoulos & Pantti, 2013).

The rise of networked journalism (Beckett, 2010), in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa mainly enhanced by the access and use of mobile devices, allows now the nation-based correspondent to receive and transmit information at the pan-African level and beyond. At this level, digital networks mean deterritorialization, virtual global reach and a hypothetical evolving setback for empiricism.

Due to the specificity of the used sample, our study does not allow regard Pro-Ams as immediate and inherent proponents of what could be referred as a *counter-epistemology* or an *alter-epistemology*. Although, it is within this frame that a *professional normative repositioning towards boundary-work* can be better understood following practitioners' self-narratives in relation to citizen media workers. This boundary-work operates through an *exclusivist attachment* to the epistemological regime and accountability system of the modern journalist, i.e. citizen media workers shall be kept outside professional journalism boundaries. A

distinct pathway is followed by those practitioners who can be described as *news innovators*, promoting a more *inclusive* interpretation of the journalistic field as one that shall be normatively kept *open* to functional reconfigurations.

These *two distinct professional sub-cultures* within international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa coincide in the perception of more balanced and plural contemporary international news flows, through complementarities between professionals and non-professionals. This considerable professional agreement can be regarded as a major finding particularly regarding the debates from the 70s and 80s around a New World Information and Communication Order: it suggests that a *representational repositioning* is evolving in international communication; one that shall be tested by extensive news content analysis.

In this respect there's now firm ground to declare that international news reporters are aware of their role as *translators of otherness* and also aware of the historically depicted representational deficits regarding Africa's media image. Our study identified two distinct levels of constraint for this translation work: a *cross-cultural level*, with correspondents having to frequently cross their cultural comfort zone, and an *epistemological level*, with reporters managing a tension between context rich information allowed by cultural empirical immersion and the rules of objectivity as cognitive detachment.

This translation work does not occur in a social or occupational vacuum; it is critically molded by very specific constraints to newswork. Criticism on international journalism ethics shall take these in clear consideration, rather than subsuming them in more or less ideological systemic determinants. On the other hand, practitioners themselves shall be aware that international news reporting – its culture and newswork – far from being an aseptic *mirror of reality* is constructed through objective and subjective constraints; these shall be explicitly communicated in their reports rather than subsumed in ambiguous narrative conventions.

### 9.3. What constraints impend over international news reporters' work?

Despite working in a geographical area highly deficient in the access to broadband Internet, contemporary correspondents working across Sub-Saharan Africa are technically highly connected to global online networks: 99.39 percent of the respondents to our online survey have access to the Internet in their workspace.

Internet is deeply transforming international reporters' newswork. Most (48.39 %) spend now eight or more daily hours online. This is a critical finding explaining why *seated journalism* is currently a deep concern among practitioners, particularly considering that among surveyed newsworkers the Internet is mostly used for newsgathering, news publication and administrative purposes.

Although generally considering that Internet benefits both quality (82.26%) and quantity (86.29%) of news from Africa, international news reporters moderate this substantial technological determinist view with critical concerns over production demands towards continuous speed and flexibility in newswork.

For them, this *seated journalism* limits the ability to fact-check information and to develop expertise from empirical fieldwork practice. These non-empirical and deterritorialized production routines translate in a "wikipediadization of news", in the saying of Drew Hinshaw, correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, based in Dakar. "As if every single article has to have all the single fact that is relevant. And all this information is available online. So, we're losing narrative, because there's so much information you can pour into a report that you forget that's also the information you don't say that also builds the story", he adds.

To this extent we can reasonably affirm that more than integrate Internet *in* their newswork, Internet *is* considerably becoming international news reporters' work. This doesn't mean that they perceive the Internet as an indistinct whole: on the contrary, they distrust more information collected from online social networks (29.03%) than the one from online search engines (9.68%).

*Citizen participation* emerges as a renewed core issue within networked international journalism. Most international news reporters agree that journalists need to give public a more participative role in news work (70.17%). At the same time, they also concur that direct collaboration between journalists and citizens in news production benefits the overall quality of news reporting (69.36%). Critically, a majority supports the need for new ethical standards in order to adopt user-generated content in news work (75.81%).

The implicit recognition of an absence of updated and adapted professional norms and rules directed to deal with user-generated content as a constraint to contemporary newswork is stressed by a further finding: much more than through a personal weblog/website (48.39%), international news reporters are actively networked through online social networks (94.45%).

This means that functional renewed professional rules are now absolutely necessary in the scope of networked journalism and represents a deep transformation for modern journalists' newswork. It is particularly expressed by the current reality of exchange between journalists and the audiences: nowadays, a considerable portion of international news reporters has to manage direct audience feedback in their newswork: 41.13 percent of the respondents to our survey receive it at least once a week. This unprecedented level of direct and virtually unfiltered interaction represents a profound transformation in professional journalism, clearly demanding for a re-organization of its functions and production routines. This comes as an addition to an already considerably competitive field of work, where most (81.81%) feel competing with other international news reporters.

In this scope, online social networks clearly emerge as important triggers for transformation of newswork. They are already among the most common newsgathering activities among international news reporters, being perceived as a relevant platform (54.84%). They notoriously emerge in practitioners' self-narratives as important monitoring tools for news-uptake and story ideation, platforms for community-building and interaction with the audiences, barometers for competition awareness and as reporting/recording tools.

Regarding practitioners' relations with news sources it's striking to note that the most problematic interaction comes from the so-called aid-industry actors. In itself this finding poses a clear agenda for future research on the realities of "instrumental message transmitters" (Seib, 1997) as it does the revealed sense of uncertainty/insecurity regarding legal protection, both among professional journalists (76.61%) and citizen media workers (72.73%). This finding is worrisome and shall led to further research and action by intervening institutions, particularly considering that participants in this study often work under repressive and/or non-democratic political regimes. It becomes evident that intervening institutions need particularly to accommodate the protection worries of citizen media organizations workers. Otherwise these *functional equivalents of journalists* – even if not in occupational, in *Freedom of Information* terms – may well be being abandoned to an

uncertain fate, as has recently been showed ("Kenya: Unlicensed Foreign Journalists in Kenya to Be Prosecuted," 2013; Rhodes, 2013).

Most international news reporters (95.97%) consider technical skills as important in a convergent media environment, and most (85.48%) also consider themselves technically prepared. Although, from the collected interview accounts, multimedia journalism often translates in an actual degradation of their work, through cost-saving strategies of news media companies, lack of investment in training, equipment, proper production routines and salaries. In order to fulfill their organizations' needs, international news reporters end up multitasking, compromising the overall quality of news reports. In our view, this finding vividly depicts an apparent evolving negotiation between an *organizational professionalism*, the media managers' demands and impositions, and an *occupational professionalism,* taken as the collegial identity of journalists (Ornebring, 2009).

Multimedia journalism practice is in fact a vivid portrait of the emergent *new economy of journalism*, based on a structural reliance on freelancers (50.81%) who perceive their socio-economic work conditions as precarious, mainly due to irregular and low salary levels, payment by news piece, temporary employment contracts, social insecurity and extremely flexible production routines. For these reasons, they not necessarily expect to keep themselves as professional journalists in the near future, but often perceive a future job in Development Communication – frequently in the U.N. and non-governmental organizations – as a pragmatic necessary step towards a more stable labor condition.

## Conclusion

This thesis challenges the narrative of international news reporting as a redundant and dying breed (Constable, 2007; Friedman, 2008; Profita, 2007; Sambrook, 2010) by proposing an evolutionary view on the emerging practices within foreign correspondence from Sub-Saharan Africa. Our study supports that contemporary international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa is being affected by critical disruptive developments, leading it to a multilayered process of repositioning (Miller & Slater, 2000), taken here as succeeding strategies in the network society (Castells, 2000; Castells & Monge, 2011). These critical transformations are reworking the meaning of foreign correspondence as defined in the modern era.

Empirical findings from this project underline *localized ruptures* in the international mediascape (Appadurai, 1996): networked digital media propose distinct resources to previous social roles, such as the one of journalism and journalists. *Through*, rather than *due to,* developments in network-based microelectronics, international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa – its socio-demographics, culture and newswork – is currently traversed by processes leading to a *paradigm shift*. We are using here Kuhn (1962) terms to describe a profound renovation of the set of practices that previously defined journalism as a discipline during a particular period of time, suggesting a *systemic reorganization* of international news reporting as a field of knowledge production rather than mere disconnected *transformations*.

This doesn't mean that previous legacy characteristics are deterministically vanishing or that they will completely disappear. In the consideration of international news reporting, as in any social-oriented process, we reject theoretical assessments that artificially separate the concrete material (technological) conditions in place from the actual accommodation practices and uses by human actors.

Concerning the contemporary socio-demographics of foreign correspondence from Sub-Saharan Africa, empirical findings from this project show how *tradition* and *innovation* actually coexist: modern international news agencies maintain a central role within contemporary journalism; it is also noteworthy that no significant transformation has occurred with reference to gender (in)equality, which has been a traditional *tour de force* in research on foreign correspondence (Beeson, 2004; Born, 1987; Fennel, 2005; Hess, 1996; L. S. Hudson, 1999; Morrison & Tumber, 1985; Nosaka, 1992; Utley, 1997).

Likewise, international news reporting is still an occupational field for a cognitive elite with high levels of formal education (Fennel, 2005; Hess, 1996; Maxwell, 1956). Our study actually shows that this may well be truth regarding both professionals and Pro-Ams, suggesting that a higher educational level is indeed necessary for entering and/or keeping in this occupation.

But despite these *localized continuities*, basic conditions for a *perfect storm* have been gathering in the last decades towards an occupational paradigm shift: a strong historical criticism over modern professional foreign correspondents' work, the emergence of new players supported by networked digital media technologies and, more recently, an international economic and financial crisis.

**Evolving multidimensional networks of correspondences**

Contemporary international news reporting is evolving *through* and *towards* multidimensional networks of correspondences, including multiple actors and multiple types of connections between them. The recognition of these multidimensional networks means that not only layers of information but also interpretation frameworks for news stories are multifaceted (Heinrich, 2012).

Within networked journalism (Beckett, 2010), syntheses of traditional professional journalism and the evolving forms of direct citizen participation through online digital media, international news reporting can then be adequately considered in itself as a distinct form of knowledge. Traditionally it has been constructed as *acquaintance with* (Park, 1940) ongoing events, based on empiric research, narrated through objective-to be reports, and a task for modern professionals. Within an evolving confederacy of correspondences, how is it changing?

*It is no longer an exclusive territory of professionals.* The professionalization of foreign correspondence obeyed to the modern industrial precept towards a scientific organization of work, often implemented towards bureaus as delocalized news factories. This previously perceived functional need is currently being challenged by the emergence of more or less organized online networks of Pro-Ams, who may not aspire to be referred as *journalists,* but for whom a *new communicational regime towards direct access and participation* seems to be critical.

While 20th century journalism was based on the professional management of a relative artificial information scarcity – using *The New York Times'* motto, "All the news that's fit to print" – the permeability of contemporary online networks openly questions

the modern journalistic authoritative point of view and its monopoly of practice (Abbott, 1988) towards more multilayered international flows and counter-flows of communication. Segments of professional journalists perceive this networked journalism as a menace to the specifics of their occupation, posing journalism as a closed profession and trying to convince news consumers that their educational and training qualifications meet the requirements of the service.

One problem with this occupational attitude is that it misses or deliberately denies that networked news consumers – and the implicit gradation and multipolarity of witness and narrative power – are themselves the transformative force behind the ongoing repositioning. Avoiding it does not solve a *de facto* challenge for journalists: that modern professional journalistic interpretive communities, united by their shared discourse and collective interpretations of key public events (Novak & Davidson, 2013; Zelizer, 1993) are now mitigated by *interpretive multidimensional networks*. Indeed, civic media curation has recently been perceived as a kind of correspondence, with non-professional individuals aggregating, selecting and disseminating information to a large number of people on social media (Monroy-Hernández, boyd, Kiciman, De Choudhury, & Counts, 2013).

Foreign correspondence as needed sense making (Archetti, 2012) in the network society objectively has now more resources available to translate plural networked subjectivities. News innovators under study here also show that the awareness towards a need of occupational repositioning comes not only from outside its boundaries, but already from inside professional journalism.

This can be better understood by the emerging news culture towards an expectation of a *transnational networked accountability,* otherwise referred as gatewatching (Bruns, 2005). The fact that audiences are now able to *directly and in a more or less self-organized way* bring to account international news reporting narrative practices is not a small transformation.

These evolving dynamics of participation generate a sense of crisis in relation to journalism verification culture, with news organizations "negotiating the tensions inherent in a transition to a digital, networked media environment, considering how journalism is evolving into a tentative and iterative process where contested accounts are examined and evaluated in public in real-time" (Hermida, 2012). This negotiation is vividly expressed in our study by the generalized practitioners' perceptions towards online social networks as relevant platforms for international news reporting, despite a considerable immediate distrust the credibility of its information.

On the other hand, contemporary international news reporting *it is no longer an exclusive territory of empiricism and modern objectivity*. Modern correspondents have been proposed as *workers of empirical truths,* with their epistemological regime operationalized through an accountability system of which are part media law, code of ethics and the organizationally-framed editor-reporter relations.

A tension towards *epistemological repositioning* comes now from the articulation between the traditional physicality and empiricism of foreign correspondence and the emerging flows from online networks. This hybridity between *physical place* and *position in the network* is clearly transforming international journalism newswork, suggesting that the way it can actively fulfill the expected societal role of journalism it's also evolving.

Internet news reporters spend now a lot of their daily time in front of one or multiple networked digital screens. For a profession traditionally based on the *groundtruth* this heavy use of the Internet cannot be adequately perceived as a *transformation*, but again rather as a notorious *paradigm shift*.

Since among international news reporters the Internet is mostly used for newsgathering, one arising question is then: Are practitioners using it while doing fieldwork (co-presence) or is this a *seated newgathering* with reporters not leaving their desk and, for instance, rewriting online social networks' feeds? Which interactions are now parts of that process? Is this leading to a less diverse and official-based journalism or rather to a more inclusive and participated journalism? It is fair to say that these are very relevant hypothesis for future research.

Networked digital media are expressed through these disruptive developments (Deuze, 2008d) that one shall also measure through historical moderation: the cultural trait, professionalism, that can be now often perceived as arrogant occupational boundary-work towards citizen media workers it may also be a fund of intrepidity that has historically allowed professional journalists to pose themselves as authoritative forces of accountability regarding public and private powers.

Surely, unsubstantiated professional intransigence has been a way to preserve questionable practices, with this meaning the historically documented shortcomings in international journalism. But this also implies asking: What do contemporary communities need a journalist to be? And how to operatively accommodate those localized needs into a globalized, networked journalism? Can organized Pro-Ams effectively fulfill the watchdog role?

Networked journalism signifies today a vast ecosystem and no longer the insulated territory of the past. As an implication, from the point of view of its social relevance and public trust, participation through the media is no longer an *option* for journalists, but rather a duty, since democratic societies still need – some argue more than never – an adjusted meaning management across distances (Hannerz, 2004).

This is not a new or an exclusive challenge posed by networked digital media. For decades, researchers have portrayed professionals losing sight of communities (Coleman, et al., 2009; Kovach & Rosentiel, 2001; Papacharissi, 2009; Rosen, 1994; Traquina, 2003). Although the need to answer communities' anxieties is not new, its contemporary form of expression is.

Our study shows that international news reporters perceive now a clear need to manage – and to do it in a coherent way – audiences' feedback, from which they derive an expressive need for new ethical standards in order to guide this more direct input from their publics. This implies a considerate resetting of professional journalism procedures and we are led to admit a necessary emergence of new and differentiated journalistic institutions.

Contemporary journalism ecosystem is now composed by multidimensional networks since it meets multiple relations between multiple actors. Future reconfigurations of international journalism will be defined by the ways these multiple networks' nodes are operationalized: the assumed guiding values, rules and norms towards collaboration practices and forms of agency institutionalization. A focus in these *processes* and *objects* rather than in occupational-centered preservationist concerns may also help to move this debate from *Are they journalists?* to *How do they produce journalism?* Ultimately, that societal need for accurate, contextualized, verified and plural information is the one guiding the very idea of journalism. In this regard, the evolving modes of journalistic narrative, as method of guiding reporters to locate and express facts (Tuchman, 1978), may even be leading to a fuller delivery of the correspondent value (Archetti, 2013).

**A new economy of foreign correspondence and future research**

This project depicts how journalism lives today a clear need for a renewed functional synthesis between tradition and innovation. Contemporary post-industrial journalism stresses the new working methods and processes promoted through networked digital media, expressively "increased openness to partnerships; increased reliance on

publicly available data; increased use of individuals, crowds and machines to produce raw material; even increased reliance on machines to produce some of the output" (C. W. Anderson, Bell, & Shirky, 2012, p. 13).

Our study shows how current international news reporting is practiced by men and women trying to fill present uncertainty with the answers that will build the journalism of the near future. This is not only a functional uncertainty, but simultaneously an economical and financial state of insecurity, with news organizations managing the costs and benefits of keeping international news reporters abroad (Petersen, 2011).

This thesis supports previous studies that have shown why freelancing is often an electronic cage (Ornebring, 2009) manifested by a-typical working conditions (Balcytiene, et al., 2011). For instance, it shows that a higher educational degree like a Master's is not an automatic predictor for a more stable financial condition. Are formal educational competencies becoming redundant in international news reporting career path? Are we assisting to the rise of elite of precarious?

Since a very considerable portion of international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa is produced by freelancers working in precarious conditions, for three or more news organizations (50.81%), how long and under which life conditions do they manage to keep in the field? Complementarily, what is the dropout rate in this occupation? Answers to these two questions prove to be critical to a better understand of the *new economy of foreign correspondence.*

As in journalism practice, also in contemporary journalism scholarship it is unethical to pretend that there are still self-evident strategies even if the subject of research is not self-evident anymore. The question is "Foreign correspondence is changing, but are the mindsets of journalism researchers developing in parallel to make sense of its evolution?" (Archetti, 2013, p. 433). We add our voice to this argument towards a more robust field of contemporary media anthropology (Bird, 2010), particularly one able to cross traditional practices that consciously or not end up creating *no research zone*s, as has been the case of international news reporting from Sub-Saharan Africa and, more generally, from the Global South: for a repositioning research subject we need repositioning research strategies and approaches.

Global media can be adequately studied through global perspectives deployed in local settings, as in the case of in-depth ethnographies. How do citizen media workers *actually* produce news content? From our own direct experience, this type of intensive and extensive transnational research demands new forms of collaboration between individual

scholars and intervening institutions in a challenging environment for independent knowledge production.

Making our own the words of Katherine Houreld, one of the participants in this study, "I'm sure the monks scribes reacted with horror to the printing press. You can't react with fear to an innovation. If you react with fear you've lost the battle, you've made yourself irrelevant", she told me one afternoon in Nairobi.

In news practice as in scholar research, is not sufficient anymore to *keep up*, but rather to *rework* previous assumptions and methods, the main challenging being to transform and substitute maladjusted practices to the needs and expectations of contemporary societies, rather than imposing occupational interests before societal requisites. This project has been fueled by an effort towards a glimpse of that future.

# APPENDIXES

# APPENDIX I - ONLINE SURVEY

**How long have you been working as a professional journalist or as a citizen media worker?**

0 – 5 years

6 – 17 years

More than 18 years

**How long have you been working in foreign correspondence?**

0 – 5 years

6 – 17 years

More than 18 years

**How long have you been working in your current post?**

0 – 5 years

6 – 17 years

More than 18 years

**For how many news organizations do you work for?**

1

2

3 or more

**Which of the following best describes your main news organization?**

Citizen Media

News Agency

Newspaper

Magazine

Radio

TV

On-line News Service

Other (please specify):

**Which of the following best describes your job?**

Freelancer

Fixer

Stringer

Translator

Part-time professional correspondent

Local journalist occasionally working as correspondent

Pro-Am / Citizen Journalist

Producer

Editorial Assistant

Special Assignment Reporter

Staff Professional Editor

Staff Professional Reporter

Other (please specify):

**How many people work with you?**

One person (me)

2 People

3 People

More than 4

**Check multiples responses if appropriate. My usual news team is composed by:**

Freelancer

Fixer

Stringer

Translator

Part-time professional correspondent

Local journalist occasionally working as correspondent

Pro-Am / Citizen Journalist

Producer

Editorial Assistant

Special Assignment Reporter

Staff Professional Editor

Staff Professional Reporter

Other (please specify):

**My news beat is more close to:**

One of a specialist

One of a general assignment

**My primary audience is:**

Domestic / Regional

International

Don’t know

**Which of the following best describes your news organization coverage?**

More focused on Breaking News

More focused on In-depth Reporting

**Check one response. Throughout my work, I make a contribution to society by providing knowledge about distant realities.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Due to your occupation in news production, in your current country are you formally protected by?**

Constitutional law

Professional status law

Local or/and International Legal Assistance. If so, please specify:

Other (please specify):

**Check one response. I feel legally protected from possible judicial issues.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. I receive feedback from my audience:**

Never

Less than once a month

Once a month

2-3 times a month

Once a week

2-3 times a week

Daily

**Rank from most to less frequent (drag and drop). In my work my main newsgathering activities are:**

Data mining from databases
Document research
Emailing sources
Face-to-face interview with official/institutional sources
Face-to-face interview with the "average" citizen/non-institutional sources
Consulting other news media
News web clipping
Official Press Releases
Online Social Networks
Press conferences
Other (please specify):

**Check one response. Other journalists' work is used by me to assess the quality of my work.**
Always
Very Often
Sometimes
Almost Never
Never
Don’t Know

**Check one response. Other journalists' work is used by my supervisors to assess the quality of my work.**
Always
Very Often
Sometimes
Almost Never
Never
Don’t Know

**Check one response. When covering an event, I feel I'm competing with other international news reporters.**
Always
Very Often
Sometimes
Almost Never
Never
Don’t Know

**Check one response. My relation with my team members is mostly:**

One typical of friends

Neutral exchange between two colleague parties

Negotiation between two parties

One typical of adversaries

**Do you have access to the Internet in your work space?**

Yes

No

**Check one response. On a daily basis how frequently do you access Internet?**

Never

Less than an hour

2-4 hours

5-7 hours

More than 8 hours

**Rank from most to less frequent (drag and drop). I mostly use Internet for:**

Administrative purposes

Newsgathering

News publication

Other (please specify):

**Do you maintain a personal weblog/website?**

Yes

No

**Do you maintain an active account in one or more online social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)?**

Yes

No

**Check one response. Information from online social networks is:**

Highly credible

As credible as any other

Credible

Not credible

Don't know

**Check one response. Information from online search engines is:**

Highly credible

As credible as any other

Credible

Not credible

Don’t know

**Check one response. Internet benefits the overall quality of international news reporting from Africa.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. Internet benefits the overall quantity of international news reporting from Africa.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. In a convergent media environment (multimedia and cross-platform) it is important to be technically prepared.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. I am technically prepared to work in a convergent media environment.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. Journalists need to give public a more participative role in newswork.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. Direct collaboration between journalists and citizens in news production benefits the overall quality of news reporting.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. In order to be more accurate and reliable, international news reporting must be based on original field work and direct eyewitness.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. Online social networks are a relevant newsgathering platform for international news reporting.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. The overall coverage of Africa by professional foreign correspondents is balanced.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. The overall coverage of Africa by Pro-Ams/ citizen journalists is balanced.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. New ethical standards are needed in order to adequately adopt user-generated content in newswork.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Check one response. Africa's media image is balanced.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Date of Birth:**

Month/Year

**Sex:**

Male

Female

**Nationality:**

_____

**City and Country where you currently work:**

_____

**With regard to your level of education check one response:**

12th grade or less

Professional school degree

Some university but no degree

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctorate

**With regard to your main area of education check one response:**

Humanities / Social Sciences

Law / International Relations

Natural Sciences / Engineering

Economics / Management

Other (please specify):

**In how many languages are you fluent?**

One (native language)

2-3

4 or more

**Identify languages in which you are fluent:**

_____

**Specify your language fluency by checking what better describes you. English, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Spanish, Local language/dialect (please specify), Other (please specify):**

None

Can understand and use every day familiar expressions

Can understand and use expressions related with areas of most immediate relevance

Can understand the main points on familiar matters regularly encountered in work

Can understand the main ideas of complex texts and technical discussions

Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize implicit meanings

Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read

## APPENDIX II - E-MAIL REMINDER

UT Austin | Portugal

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATORY FOR EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES, COLAB

Paulo Nuno Vicente
New University of Lisbon
pnvicente@gmail.com

Some days ago, you should have received an email inviting you to participate in a Survey on International News Reporting in Africa, which is being conducted within the Advanced Digital Media Program, UT Austin-Portugal Program.

That same email was sent to more than _____ journalists and citizen media workers working all across the continent.

A number of participants have already responded to the survey. However, we would like to have as many respondents as possible, as this is the first survey to include professional journalists and citizen media workers throughout Africa, and can give us a good picture about how reporters work in this continent.

If you haven't done so, we would appreciate it if you would follow the link below to answer the survey:

_____

Thank you very much for your help in this international research project.

Paulo Nuno Vicente

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